

High Ability Program Plan



GREATER JASPER CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

Growing Resilience, Engagement and Academics Together

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 an 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 whose academic needs would not be met in the regular classroom setting and would benefit from specially designed programs 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.

COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE

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. Greater Jasper Schools is committed to providing a systematic and differentiated program of effective services for these students; this proactive approach will facilitate development of their high potential and promote their positive adjustment.

IDENTIFICATION

Identification Process

- **Step 1:** Screen all students in grades K, 2, and 5 for identification for High Ability programming the following year by using the Cog-At. (January)
- **Step 2:** Committee reviews all nominations for programming and IQ scores from the screening process and produces the screening pool (Nominations and SAS scores of 115 and above are included in the pool).
- **Step 3:** Students in the screening pool take the IReady diagnostic test in both Reading and Math.
- **Step 4:** Committee reviews achievement test score and IQ test score of all students in the pool.
- **Step 5:** Committee constructs a preliminary list of students who may be high ability in general intellectual or specific domains (Math or LA).
- **Step 6:** Provide additional testing for those moving from a different school or district.
- **Step 7:** Teachers complete the Observational Assessment for students in the potential pool.
- **Step 8:** Ask for teacher nominations for high ability programming if a student is not listed in the potential pool but exhibits high ability characteristics.

Instruments/Assessments

1. CogAT: Cognitive Abilities Test- Quantitative
2. IReady Diagnostic for both Math and Reading-Achievement/Performance
3. Purdue Checklist – Qualitative
4. Teacher Recommendation

Identification Procedure for New Students

All new students to Greater Jasper Schools participate in the High Ability screening process.

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. The decision is made in regards to the student's best interest.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The goals, objectives, content, process, and product of the 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 may be placed in a cluster classroom and will 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 school students in grades 6 and 7 are placed in honors courses in both Math and Language Arts.

Identified eighth grade students are given the opportunity to earn high school credit in the following courses:

- Engineering Essentials
- Algebra I
- Biology I
- German I
- French I
- Spanish I
- Preparation for College and Careers

9-12

Identified students in grades 9-12 have the opportunity to participate in the following courses.

- English 9 Honors
- Algebra I Honors
- Geometry Honors
- Biology Honors
- Chemistry Honors
- English 10 Honors
- AP World History; Modern
- Algebra II Honors
- AP Environmental Science
- AP Computer Science Principles
- AP Language/Comp.
- AP Literature/Comp.
- AP US History
- AP Psychology
- AP Chemistry
- AP Physics
- AP Biology
- AP Calculus
- AP Studio Art
- AP Drawing
- AP Statistics

AP Government
Economics Honors
Pre-Calculus Honors
English 12 Honors

See the links below for a complete list of course offerings at Jasper High School.

[Jasper High School Freshman Course Selection](#)

[Jasper High School Sophomore Course Selection](#)

[Jasper High School Junior Course Selection](#)

[Jasper High School Senior Course Selection](#)

[Jasper High School Course Description Booklet](#)

Other 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.

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 a 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

Evaluation of the GJCS high ability program will occur annually. Feedback through surveys of students and teachers 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.

Program Revision

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

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 multimedia experiences.
8. 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.
9. Parents, avoid over structuring a child's life...they need free time.
10. 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.
11. 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 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.