

Monroe-Gregg School District - High Ability Program

Mission Statement

The Monroe-Gregg School District recognizes that high ability students are found in all populations. In order to develop the potential and achievement of identified students in the Monroe-Gregg School District, our High Ability Program supports classroom teachers in providing appropriate learning experiences that provide challenge and rigor in order to develop the cognitive and affective processes of high ability students.

Definition of High Ability Students

A high ability student is 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.” --*Indiana Code (20-36-1-3)*

Program Overview

The Monroe-Gregg School District High Ability Program follows the Indiana State mandates for high ability students in grades K – 12, and is overseen by a Program Coordinator. It is supported by grant funds from the Indiana Department of Education, and provides resources, training for teachers, and classroom instruction that supports the unique needs of the identified, high ability students in general intellect and the specific academic areas of language and math.

Students are identified as having potential for achievement and/or demonstrating high levels of achievement in general intellectual ability, Language Arts and/or Mathematics as compared to same-age peers. Students participate in screening processes to determine levels of potential and achievement. Students who demonstrate high levels of ability and/or achievement are considered for formal identification.

Formal identification procedures take place in grades K, 2, 5 and 10 or as needed per teacher recommendation and parent and/or student nomination. Student information and data gathered from various tools and assessments are used in the identification process by a team of qualified teachers who assess student data for evidence of achievement and general intellectual strengths. The final identification of students is made during second semester for grades K, 2, 5 and 10 each year.

The list of identified students is submitted to the State Department of Education and HA status is noted on student school records. School administrators, program representatives, counselors, classroom teachers and parents receive information about identified students at appropriate times within the school calendar in order to support instruction and meet individual student needs.

Student Identification

Many documents may be used by the Program Coordinator to screen for and identify student potential and achievement and monitor progress. Based on data collected, recommendations for identification or change in services are made to an identification team made of qualified teachers and school professionals who will have access to any or all data collected.

Identification for HA students will focus each year on kindergarten, second grade, fifth grade, and 10th grade with formal screening and identification each year according to the following procedures:

Kindergarten:

All kindergarten students are screened for potential at the end of the first semester with the YCAT. Data is analyzed by a committee of qualified teachers/administrators who approve recommendations for identification by March 1.

2nd Grade:

Second grade students are screened for achievement at the beginning of the first semester with the CogAT test. The CogAT is administered and additional data is gathered for students who score at a stanine of 8 or 9. Data is reviewed by a committee of qualified teachers/administrators who approve recommendations for identification by March 1.

5th Grade:

All fifth grade students participate in CogAT testing in December to screen for achievement. Students who score at stanines of 7, 8 or 9 are identified for high achievement in Math and Language/Reading. Additional data is gathered as needed. Data is reviewed by a committee of qualified teachers/administrators who approve recommendations for identification by May 1.

Grades 1, 3, 4:

Teachers of these grades use professional judgment and discretion, with the help of the M-GSDHA program resources, to screen and nominate students for identification throughout the school year and may nominate a student for formal identification at any time by contacting the program coordinator and completing the Teacher Recommendation form and Student Information Form. Data is reviewed by a committee of qualified teachers/administrators who approve recommendations for identification by May 1.

Grades 6, 7 and 8:

Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 are grouped according to data, teacher recommendation and parent nomination. All previously identified HA students are included in the advanced math and/or language arts classes, dependent upon identification.

Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12:

The PSAT is given to all 10th grade students and serves as a screening and identification measure for AP classes. Interested junior students may also take the PSAT for the National Merit Scholar Competition. ISTEP Pass+ and/or End of Course Assessments are used for Algebra I, Biology I, and English 10 to identify students for AP courses in these three areas. Students are grouped according to teacher recommendation, parent nomination, and self-nomination for advanced classes.

High Ability Instruction Grades K – 5

High ability students remain in the regular classroom for their core learning experiences and instruction. Groups of identified students will be gathered at each grade level to provide peer support that better meets the academic and social needs of high ability students. This inclusion program utilizes differentiated instruction with the support of Indiana State Standards and resources provided through the M-GSDHA Program. With the help and support of the High Ability Coach, classroom teachers use professional judgment to provide leveled instruction as appropriate to meet the individual needs of the identified students for both potential and achievement in the areas of general intellectual ability, English/Language Arts and or Mathematics. Teachers differentiate by incorporating advanced curriculum and instruction, high level thinking skills and individual learning style(s) into daily lessons and curricular activities which may include: independent projects, creative writing, and critical and creative thinking skills through problem solving.

High Ability Instruction Grades 6 – 12

Monrovia Middle School and Monrovia High School offer courses to meet the needs of high ability students. Advanced Placement (AP) courses in European History, English Language, English Literature, Calculus, Biology, Computer Science, Physics and US History are available for high school students. Furthermore, advanced courses in English (Honors 9, 10, 11, 12), Math (Honors Pre-Calculus, Engineering PLTW, and Finite & Statistics), and Science (Honors Anatomy and Physiology, Honors Biology I, Honors Chemistry I, and Human Body Systems PLTW) are offered to high ability learners. Algebra 8 and English 8 Honors are also offered for advanced Math and English students. Pre-Algebra and English 7 Honors are offered to advanced 7th graders. Sixth-grade high ability learners are offered advanced language arts and math.

Progress Monitoring

ISTEP+ test scores of all formally identified students in grades 2 – 8 will be reported to parents and placed in student files.

Release/Change in Services

A student's need for high ability services may change over time for a variety of reasons. If it is determined by available data that a student may no longer benefit from high ability services, a student may be released from the high ability program with approval from the BBPC or by parent request. Classroom teachers may begin the process of a change in services by professional observation and/or judgment and gathered data. Working with the high ability coach, parent(s), coordinator, and/or other professionals, teachers may schedule a meeting with parent, student and high ability coordinator or coach to develop and agree on interventions for one grading period. A second meeting will be scheduled to determine outcomes and placement for services based on these interventions. If a decision to discontinue services is made and approved by the BBPC, a letter to communicate this change in programming to the parent or guardian with a Release from Services Parent Letter. Parents are asked to return a signed copy to be placed in the student's permanent file.

Appeals

The Monroe-Gregg School District has a committee of highly qualified teachers, administrators and staff who serve on the Appeals Committee. Parents may appeal any decision made by a program committee by contacting the High Ability Coordinator and providing a rationale for why the initial testing or data gathered is not valid for their child. The corporation will provide alternative measures and data for the student. This will be reported to the appeals committee within a reasonable amount of time, and parents will be notified.

Student Support

Building administrators, counselors, HA program coordinator, The High Ability Coach, and classroom teachers are available to discuss the progress of individual high ability students and their specific needs. Parents with input or concerns are encouraged to contact any of these professionals, and schedule a conference if needed. High ability students at the Middle & High School level are counseled for college preparation and in the college application process by qualified school counselors who are active in helping college-bound students prepare for college and apply for scholarships. Students are grouped into intellectual peer groups when possible or as needed to provide peer support for HA students.

Broad Based Planning Committee

The high ability program is monitored by a broad based planning committee. This group includes administrators, counselors, building representatives, teachers, parents, and community members. The group meets no less than two times each school year to discuss program development, identification and to make, recommend, and/or approve changes in programming and procedures.