



High Ability Program

Mission Statement

GEO Academies believes all students no matter culture, socioeconomic background, or race has the potential to perform at a high academic level in all core academics areas. Our school recognizes the need to identify these students through systematic methods and will offer services to develop their academic knowledge and provide a supportive learning environment to support this talent. Our high ability program provides these supports so our students can be contributing members of society.

Multifaceted Identification Plan

Our students are screened for high ability identification regardless of socioeconomic status, cultural background, underachievement, or disabilities. Students can qualify in the following areas: general intellectual, math, or language arts. Qualitative measures are also collected as needed. If a student qualifies for high ability services, the student's family will be notified by a Parent Notification Letter.

Current HA Students: Students already identified as high ability and participating in the HA programming will continue to receive services unless they are withdrawn through our exit procedures.

K-6th Grade Students: We screen all students in grades K, 2nd, 5th for identification for High Ability programming the following year by using the CogAt. We also provide all teachers with a list of characteristics of students with high abilities and ask them for nominations for this programming.

7th and 8th Grade Students: All 7th and 8th grade students will be assessed using I-Ready assessment in September and again in January. All 8th graders will also take the PSAT in the fall semester. 7th and 8th grade students scoring above the 95th percentile may be identified as high ability. The High Ability Committee will meet to review testing data, teacher nominations, and parent observations to determine if student is ready for the High Ability program. Those students being placed in High Ability program will be counseled and moved into appropriate courses.

9th – 12th Grade Students: All students in grades 9 will take the PSAT in the fall of their freshman year. Student who performs at or above the 95th percentile on this nationally norm-referenced test will be identified for advance programming. All 9th and 10th grade students will also take the Knowledge Assessment for dual credit courses. The High Ability Committee will meet to review testing data, teacher nominations, and parent observations to determine if student is ready for the High Ability program. Those students being placed in High Ability program will be counseled and moved into appropriate courses.

If any of the students above score in the 80th to 94th percentile on PSAT and/or i-Ready and other data collected about the student including ILEARN score show that student is within the top 10% of their grade level that they are eligible for our High Ability program.

Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction

We ensure that high ability students are provided with instruction that matches their unique needs. This includes various types of differentiated strategies such as learning higher grade level content, providing enrichment activities such as Robotics, giving assignments that promote higher level thinking skills, and allowing exploration of a topic of interest.

KG – 2nd Grade Students: All Kindergarten through 2nd grade students is identified as high ability during their school year and provided enrichment and acceleration through a tiered approach with differentiation of instruction based on individual skill sets. Students may also be place in a cluster classroom depending on their individual needs. The use of ongoing formative assessment provides monitoring of student progress. Modification of the 7 goals, objectives, and level of expected outcomes of student performance are adjusted accordingly to maximize potential.

3rd – 6th Grade Students: Students in grades 3rd through 5th that qualify for high ability services are placed in a cluster classroom or receive differentiated and/or accelerated instruction. Instructional strategies vary by teacher. Compacting, flexible grouping, acceleration and tiering are among those areas of differentiation most used.

Grades 7th & 8th – Identified Middle School students are provided opportunities to participate in accelerated courses in English, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Introduction to World Languages is also available. Enrollment is based upon ability in each content area allowing acceleration in one or more courses dependent upon unique student learning needs.

Grades 9th – 12th – These students have the opportunity to take the Knowledge Assessment to determine if they are ready for Early College courses through Ivy Tech or Indiana University. If student passes this assessment, they will be counseled by our College and Career Counselor and placed in appropriate college courses.

Guidance and Counseling Plan

Students in High Ability will require support with positive social and emotional development as well as skills with organization, time management, self-discipline, and motivation. Our teachers and counselors are educated on the characteristics of high ability students. Our school counselors help our students in make informed decisions about course selection and assist with any academic issues. The families of high ability students are given the option of choosing one-on-one or small group counseling with our licensed social workers. These sessions focus on dealing with stress, bullying, competitiveness, social skills, study skills, leadership skills, and college and career readiness.

Professional Development

Our school pursues the finest and most qualified teaching candidates for positions in our schools and High Ability qualifications are valued. Instructors who teach Dual Credit courses receive additional training and/or certification from post-secondary education institutions. We currently only have one teacher with HA certification and two other working towards their HA certification. All participate in our local professional development which includes weekly teacher meeting, which are often focused on differentiation of instruction and curriculum; regular collaboration with High Ability Coordinator; additional education on the identification process and instructional strategies; and opportunities to attend state and national high ability conferences to enhance their certification.

Evaluation Plan

The High Ability committee is available to support and assess the high ability program. The committee consists of the high ability coordinator, school principal, counselors, and other building administrators. The committee meets at least annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and services provided to our students. This committee takes into consideration the evaluation rubric set forth by IDOE High Ability Department, grant funding, and student success when making decisions on how to grow our program.

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

Appeals Procedure

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 reason for the appeal. The appellant will then meet with the building principal, the high ability resource teacher, the coordinator, college and career counselor, and the curriculum specialist 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 decide on a course of action. Students who are not achieving in the High Ability program may be removed by a parent, an administrator, a guidance counselor, or a classroom teacher request. 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. A decision will be made on the placement of the child. 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.

Exit Procedure

If a teacher or parent believes a high ability placement for services is no longer appropriate, a student may be exited from the program. This process can be initiated by the school or by the parent. A parent or student may voluntarily request a removal from the program at any time. In addition, other circumstances could result in the student exiting from the program. However, in these instances, for a probationary period of no less than one grading period, efforts will be made to retain the student in the program. A team of the parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, counselors, and the student will meet to examine issues of concern and discuss interventions that may be implemented. Examples of interventions which may be implemented in an attempt to improve the situation could include contracts, behavior modification schedules, and conferences with students and/or parents. At the end of the probationary period, the student's progress will be reviewed, and it will be determined whether or not the student should exit services. If a student is exited from the program, the parents/guardians will be notified in writing of that decision and sign the documentation for their child to be exited from the program.

GEO Academies
High Ability Testing
Parent Permission Form

Student Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

School Building: _____ 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: _____

GEO Academies
Withdraw from High Ability Program

School Building: _____

Student Name: _____ Grade Level: _____

After careful consideration, it is agreed that _____

should be withdrawn from the program as of _____

because _____

Signed:

Parent: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Principal: _____ Date: _____

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 significance; 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.

Internal

Internal evaluation of the high ability program will occur annually. Feedback through surveys of students, teachers, parents, and community members will be used by the school 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

The school 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 The school 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.