

High-Ability Handbook



Clinton Central School Corporation

A resource guide providing information relating to
Programing for high-ability students in grades K-12.

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Clinton Central School Corporation High Ability Programming

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Broad Based Planning Committee (BBPC)

The Indiana Administrative Code requires the existence of a Broad Based Planning Committee for High Ability. “Broad-based planning committee” means a diverse group with representation from:

- (1) educators; (High Ability Coordinator, all HA teachers, building principals)
 - (2) parents/community members; (1 elementary level parent and 1 secondary level parent)
 - (3) students; (1 elementary student and 1 secondary student)
 - (4) other stakeholders;
- organized for the purposes of planning and development of programs.

Members should have an interest in and support for high ability education. Members should also include decision-makers within the corporation. The High Ability Coordinator keeps a record of official members, including contact information.

The BBPC represents stakeholders in high ability programming and its purpose is to review the implementation of the services and programs for high ability students. The committee serves as the:

- Representation of key stakeholders
- Sounding board for programmatic ideas
- Keeper of the vision for high ability education
- Assessor of the degree to which program goals are being met
- Impetus for continuous improvement
- Ambassador for high ability services in the community

Although the local governing body has ultimate responsibility and authority for all student services, the committee has the role of planning and reviewing policies and services. Suggested roles for the Broad Based Planning Committee include:

- Review the five required written plans that are to be available for public inspection (511 IAC 6-9.1-1)
 - Multifaceted Identification Plan
 - Curriculum & Instructional Strategies Plan
 - Counseling & Guidance Plan
 - Program Assessment Plan

- Review implementation of the 4 required plans.
- Review the results of the programs for students with high ability, including student assessment results, program effectiveness, or student achievement. (IC 20 – 36 – 2)
- Prepare an action plan for improvement related to the five plans.
- Develop a collaborative relationship between school staff(s) and the committee.
- Develop a 3-5 year strategic plan for program development.

High Ability Identification in Indiana

Because there are many components to being high ability, it is very important that schools identify these learners as soon as possible. How does this process work in Indiana?

The following is an excerpt from the document, “Identifying Students With High Abilities In Indiana”, a publication of the Department of Education:

“Effective July 1, 2007, Indiana schools shall identify students with high ability in the general intellectual and specific academic domains and provide them with appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction in core content areas, K-12 (refer to IC-20-36-2-2). Specific identification processes remain a local decision and will vary according to district size and demographics.

The Indiana Code defines a student with high abilities as one who:

- 1) 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:*
- 2) is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests (IC 20-36-1-3).”*

Retrieved from: <http://www.doe.in.gov/highability>

Multifaceted Identification Plan

Several tools will be used to identify High Ability students at Clinton Central School Corporation, including the CogAT test, the NWEA test, and ISTEP+ test. Students in kindergarten, second grade, fifth grade, and eighth grade will be given the CogAT screener test. Students who score in the 8th or 9th stanine will then take the CogAT full battery assessment. The CogAT is a test that determines the aptitude, or potential, a student has for advanced thinking and reasoning. Any student in kindergarten, second grade, fifth grade, and eighth grade scoring in the 8th or 9th stanine on the partial composite standard age score will be identified as having potential for high ability in math. Students receiving a verbal standard age score in the 8th or 9th stanine will be identified as having potential for high ability in language arts.

The NWEA test will be used as a tool to determine a student's level of achievement. The NWEA test is given to all Kindergarten – 8th Grade students in Clinton Central Schools. The scores from kindergarten, second grade, fifth grade, and eighth grade will be used as another tool for high ability identification. Kindergarten students who score in the 99% on NWEA in math and/or English Languages Arts will be identified as having the potential to perform at a high ability in math, English Language Arts, or both. Students in second grade, fifth grade, and eighth grade who score at or above a 96% on NWEA in math and/or English Languages Arts will be identified as having the potential to perform at a high ability in math, English Language Arts, or both.

The ISTEP+ Test will be used as supporting data to help determine a student's potential for High Ability Services.

New Students to Clinton Central, who show an interest in high ability services, will be given the CogAT screener to determine their academic potential for admittance into the high ability program. The high ability screening team will also evaluate any other data available from previous schools.

Identification Test Schedule

Kindergarten - NWEA

Second grade - CogAT and NWEA

Fifth grade – CogAT and NWEA

Eighth grade - CogAT and NWEA

Characteristics of High Ability Students

Note: Not all High Ability students will have all the characteristics, and some students will show some of these characteristics and not be a High Ability student.

- Reads intensively at an accelerated rate.
- Has extensive vocabulary, background knowledge in a particular area , and memory of detail.
- Solves problems involving critical thinking
- Intuitive and enjoys logic and puzzles
- Grasps the big picture and concepts; forms connections
- Long attention span
- Extremely sensitive and/or introverted
- Intense energy level and talks fast
- Thinks outside the box and is creative
- Sense of humor
- Curious, observant
- Perfectionist
- Interest in complex games, fantasy and/or non-fiction
- Observes before participating
- Intense sense of morality
- Leadership potential
- Learns easily and gains new information rapidly
- High critical thinking skills
- Self-motivated and works independently

Source: <http://www.iag-online.org/resources/IAG-Parent-Guide-12-11.pdf>

An identification committee will be established to review qualitative and quantitative data. The identification committee will consist of the High Ability Coordinator, elementary teacher, junior high teacher, high school teacher, and an administrator. Students will be identified in the areas of mathematics, English Language Arts, or general intellectual.

Letters will be sent to parents informing them of their child's identification as having the potential for performing at a high ability in math, English Language Arts, or General Intellectual and placement in a cluster classroom. Parents will sign and return a permission letter granting participation in the Clinton Central High Ability program. It is a parents right to refuse High Ability Services.

Clinton Central Elementary and Jr. High Schools provide services to high ability learners using an adapted Cluster Grouping Model. With this model students in the elementary and junior high are purposely placed in cluster classrooms based upon their abilities, potential, and achievement. Included in this program are a grades 3-4 and grades 5-6 pull out program. At Clinton Central High School, high ability students are encouraged to participate in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and honors classes in the various content areas.

After the high ability identification process has been completed, any parent or guardian who disagrees with the decision has the right to appeal. An appeal may be requested for reconsideration for high ability programming to the Clinton Central School Corporation High Ability Committee by submitting a request for review to the corporation High Ability Coordinator or building level administrator. To file an appeal the parent or guardian must fill out the High Ability Program Appeal Form (see Appendix A) for the respective grade level up to 14 calendar days after the placement decision has been made. The corporation High Ability Identification Committee will review the request and the student's current criteria and make a final determination.

High Ability Identification Committee at Clinton Central School Corporation consists of:

- High Ability Coordinator
- Building level Administrator
- Elementary teacher
- Jr-Sr. High teacher

High Ability Programming Exit Process

Students, parents, and teachers may initiate exiting procedures when high ability programming is no longer appropriate. Parents of a student receiving high ability programming wishing to withdraw/exit their student from the program due to personal or academic reasons may notify the committee in writing at any time. If a student or parent requests removal from the program, the committee shall meet with the parent and student before honoring the request.

If a student, parent, or teacher believes a high ability placement for services is no longer appropriate, he or she may:

1. Arrange a conference with the parties involved, including the parent, administrator and the teacher providing services. This conference may be a telephone conference.
2. Parent, student, teacher and administrator examine issues of concern and discuss interventions that may be implemented.
3. Participants agree on an RTI plan not less than one semester to implement interventions.
4. At the end of the RTI Timeline, the parent, student, teacher and administrator meet to review progress and determine whether or not the student should exit services.
5. If an exit is deemed appropriate, the parent signs permission to remove the student from high ability placement and services. (See Appendix C)
6. Parent permission for exit and documentation of meetings/interventions are sent to the high ability coordinator.
7. High ability coordinator removes high ability flag for student in database.

Curriculum and Instructional Strategies Plan

Introduction and Rationale

The Plan for Curriculum and Instruction is constructed at the district level and details specifically how the curriculum and instruction are differentiated in breadth, depth of content, and materials used to meet the needs of one or more high ability students within each grade level. At a minimum, it should include English Language Arts and Math, K-12. It shows how the curriculum for high ability students is differentiated from the general education curriculum to promote such things as higher order thinking, creative problem solving, and effective researching. This should include a Scope and Sequence or Curriculum Map to show the K-12 articulation of the curriculum for high ability students. When looking at the Curriculum and Instructional Strategies Plan, an interested party could see what was provided for students with high ability at each grade level and how the learning progresses in a purposeful way from K-12. Regardless of the particular format used, the Curriculum and Instructional Strategies Plan should demonstrate clearly:

- Content is both accelerated and enriched.
- Students are given opportunities to pursue individual areas of choice.
- Materials used are written at levels of complexity appropriate for students with high ability.
- Standards that are above grade level may be included.
- Assessments call for demonstration of advanced understanding and the skills of synthesis, analysis, and evaluation.
- Careful attention has been paid to vertical articulation.

Policy for Whole Grade Acceleration

Clinton Central School Corporative strives to provide every child, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, or giftedness access to a challenging, standard-based curriculum. Research shows that students develop at different rates and some students can exceed the grade-level proficient long before their age peer group. With this in mind, Clinton Central strives to ensure that every student be provided the opportunity fully develop his/her intellectual, creative, and academic capabilities. In order to meet these needs, whole-grade acceleration may be an alternative to what is considered the normal academic tracks.

Whole-Grade Acceleration

“Acceleration is really about letting students soar. Acceleration is a strategy that respects individual differences and acknowledges the fact that some of the differences merit educational flexibility.” Kumar Singam

Whole grade acceleration is a universally accepted, though rarely used method of intervention that , “...has been shown to increase motivation, reduce boredom, and enhance the social and emotional well-being of appropriately selected students.” (Ohio Department of Education)

Whole grade acceleration, or grade skipping, is not appropriate for every high ability student. Acceleration must match the readiness and motivation of the student.

Parents must ask themselves if they truly believe their child is mature enough to handle the advanced curriculum. Parents must also be ready to accept that accelerated students will be exposed to social topics of older students at an earlier age, and will need to evaluate whether their child will be able to interact successfully with older students. Parents should also talk to their child to be sure the child is on board with the whole-grade acceleration.

Steps to Whole-Grade Acceleration K-8

1. A written request is submitted to the building principal.
2. An acceleration evaluation committee is formed, consisting of the building principal, the current teacher of the student, the high ability coordinator, and a teacher at the grade level to which the student may be accelerated. The building guidance counselor may also be included if there is a guidance counselor on staff.
3. The committee will evaluate the students for whole-grade acceleration based upon both qualitative and quantitative student data.
4. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the acceleration will proceed if a two-thirds majority of the committee recommend the placement. The decision of the committee is to be considered final.
5. A written decision will be sent to the building principal and to the student’s parents or legal guardians.
6. A transition period will be allowed, in which time the parents or teachers involved have the opportunity to request in writing that the accelerated student be placed back in his/her original grade level.
7. After the transition period, the acceleration is considered a permanent placement.

Counseling and Guidance Plan

The social and emotional health of high ability students is very important to the staff at Clinton Central School Corporation. It is important that the affective goals of students be attended to as well as the cognitive and academic goals. This may include issues dealing with self-esteem, peer pressure, competitiveness, perfectionism, and social skills- all of which high ability students may sometimes have difficulties with.

Ideal practices for meeting the unique needs of students with high abilities must include classroom and guidance efforts differentiated to meet the socio-emotional needs of high ability students. The teachers may coordinate and facilitate whole group, small group and individual lessons for students based on need.

The teacher will create opportunities for consultation with the counselor and students, if deemed necessary. High ability students will be offered guidance services to address their affective needs through a guidance counselor, or the school counselor can provide ongoing consultation with the classroom teacher, students, and parents.

The teacher will support high ability students by facilitating the needed response that addresses the specified area at issue. These students may require a Response to Instruction (RTI) plan that documents the goals and progress made.

High ability students at the Jr-Sr High School level will be provided with career guidance that is designed to meet their individual needs based on their individual talents and strengths. High ability learners are often multi-talented, and this can cause more difficulty in making career decisions. Special care should be taken to ensure students are given the opportunity to explore career possibilities and to assist them in aligning these possibilities with interests and abilities. Assistance is often needed to recognize where interests and abilities might be used in college planning and career decision-making. Such assistance may include:

- Mentoring opportunities.
- Career shadowing opportunities.
- Pre-college opportunities, such as dual enrollment in college courses or academic summer programs/ camps in the college setting.
- Knowledge of college selection and application process.
- Knowledge of financial assistance opportunities.

- Information on talent search programs and opportunities for gifted students, such as Midwest Talent Search through the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University (<http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/>).

Program Evaluation Plan

The Broad Based Planning Committee will conduct an annual review of the high ability program. The committee will monitor the progress of identified students through analysis of all available data and will make recommendations for program adjustments.

Professional Development Plan

Introduction and Rationale

When designing professional development related to students with high ability, all facets of the program, as well as all individuals with a vested interest in the program, need to be targeted. A well thought out plan for professional development will move the district services forward.

Groups or individuals that will need professional development:

- District High Ability Coordinator
- Teachers assigned to work with high ability students
- Building principals and other administrators
- Counselors
- All other teachers
- Parents

The Coordinator and the K-12 teachers who are assigned to provide core content instruction for students identified as having high ability will need the most in-depth knowledge of gifted education. These individuals may be working toward having a Gifted and Talented License. This license is added to an existing teaching license in the State of Indiana. Professionals seeking this License need to take the coursework required by a university accredited to provide such coursework by the Indiana Department of Education and to pass a proficiency exam determined by the IDOE.

All coordinators and teachers of high ability students need to demonstrate their understanding of the characteristics and needs of gifted children, identification practices and procedures that are based on best practice and consistent with Indiana Code, how to structure services for students with high ability that will demonstrate program effectiveness, and how to develop and assess curriculum and instruction that is appropriately differentiated for students with high ability.

Building principals and other administrators need professional development as they have the following responsibilities related to high ability students:

- Understanding the identification process that has been developed at the district level.
- Aligning the implementation of student services with the district design.
- Facilitating delivery of services for students, such as scheduling classes to facilitate differentiation of student instruction through grouping and collaboration.
- Providing leadership in analysis of student achievement data.

- Providing in-depth training opportunities in gifted education to maximize both teacher and student performance.
- Addressing parental concerns for the appropriate academic challenge for individual students.

Counselors need an understanding of the characteristics and needs of high ability students. They need an understanding of how those may manifest in terms of behavior and the associated issues faced for those students; this includes students who are both high ability and have another area of difference that may cause them to go unrecognized as having advanced potential (referred to as Twice Exceptional Learners). They need to know appropriate strategies for addressing those needs and issues and then to build an affective curriculum across grade levels that will systematically address those concerns. In addition, high ability students have different needs for college and career guidance; the counselors need to know how to differentiate the guidance for these students in order for them to develop to their advanced potential.

Classroom teachers not specifically assigned to high ability need a basic understanding of the characteristics and possible behavioral manifestations of students who are high ability as well as how students in the district are identified for services. This will help them identify students who may have been overlooked in the identification process.

Parents of students who are identified as having high ability need professional development. They need to know how and why students are identified, as well as the programs and services available to students in the district. They need to know the characteristics and needs of these students as well as how to facilitate the development of the advanced potential. They also need to know common issues and how to assist their child.

Appendix A: Appeal Forms

**CLINTON CENTRAL SCHOOL CORPORATION
HIGH ABILITY PROGRAM
GRADES 1-6 PLACEMENT APPEAL FORM**

Student Name _____

Grade Level for 20____-20____ School Year _____

Parent(s) Name _____

Home Address _____

Telephone # _____ (Home)

_____ (Work)

Review application for placement in:

- _____ 1st Grade High Ability Program
- _____ 2nd Grade High Ability Program
- _____ 3rd Grade High Ability Program
- _____ 4th Grade High Ability Program
- _____ 5th Grade High Ability Program
- _____ 6th Grade High Ability Program

_____ Math _____ Language Arts

The following items are possible reasons for requesting an additional review of this student's application file for the High Ability Program. Read these carefully and indicate which reasons you believe apply in this situation. Explain why the choice(s) selected are applicable. Include a copy of any additional information.

1. Special circumstances have existed which cause this student to (a) test poorly, (b) receive an inappropriate score, (c) rate a low recommendation, (d) have low grades. Comments:

2. We have additional test information. Comments:

3. This student has recently received special recognition. Comments:

4. Other comments:

_____	_____
Parent Signature	Date
_____	_____
Principal's Signature	Date
_____	_____
High Ability Coordinator	Date

Send to: High Ability Coordinator
Clinton Central School Corporation
815 N. State Road 29
Michigantown, Indiana 46057
(765) 249-2255

Please complete the Placement Appeal Form and mail or to the address above. This form must be returned by June 1st. The committee will review all appeals. You will be notified of the decision by mail.

**CLINTON CENTRAL SCHOOL CORPORATION
HIGH ABILITY PROGRAM
GRADES 7-8 PLACEMENT APPEAL FORM**

Student Name _____
Grade Level for 20____-20____ School Year _____
Current School _____ Next Year's School _____
Parent(s) Name _____
Home Address _____

Telephone # _____ (Home)
_____ (Work)

Review application for placement in:

_____ 7th Grade High Ability
Program
 English/Language Arts
 Mathematics

Program _____ 8th Grade High Ability
 English/Language Arts
 Mathematics

The following items are possible reasons for requesting an additional review of this student's application file for the High Ability Program. Read these carefully and indicate which reasons you believe apply in this situation. Explain why the choice(s) selected are applicable. Include a copy of any additional information.

1. Special circumstances have existed which cause this student to (a) test poorly, (b) receive an inappropriate score, (c) rate a low recommendation, (d) have low grades. Comments:

2. We have additional test information. Comments:

3. This student has recently received special recognition. Comments:

4. Other comments:

Parent Signature

Date

Principal's Signature

Date

High Ability Coordinator

Date

Send to: High Ability Coordinator
Clinton Central School Corporation
815 N. State Road 29
Michigantown, Indiana 46057
(765) 249-2255

Please complete the Placement Appeal Form and mail or to the address above. This form must be returned by June 1st. The committee will review all appeals. You will be notified of the decision by mail

Appendix B: Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade Form

We request that the Clinton Central School Corporation arrange for the evaluation of our/my child for early entrance into the Clinton Central School Corporation:

_____ Kindergarten

_____ First grade program

Name of Child: _____

Legal Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Birthplace: _____ Birthdate: _____

Name and Address of any Kindergarten or Pre-School your child has attended.

Please attach any records concerning your child's participation in another Kindergarten or Pre-School program and a copy of a recent physical examination by a licensed physician.

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Appendix C: High Ability Parent Exit Contract Form

After reviewing the “Student Exit Procedures” for the High Ability and Honors Program and participating in a conference, I wish to:

_____ withdraw _____ from the High Ability program
(Student’s Name)

_____ keep _____ in the program after completing the
(Student’s Name)
following recommendations:

Task commitment: _____

Grades below expected standard: _____

Other: (i.e. project completion, homework, etc.) _____

Date Teacher’s Signature

Date Parent’s Signature

Date Student’s Signature

Date Principal’s Signature

Date High Ability Coordinator’s Signature