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High Ability Plan Overview
Updated October 2026

Mission Statement

Irvington Community Schools' High Ability Program: Our Irvington Way

The mission of Irvington Community Schools' High Ability Program is...
...to recognize and respect the unique needs of high ability K-12 learners by offering a challenging differentiated curriculum paired with research-based instructional strategies
...to promote responsible peer-to-peer collaboration through the development of enhanced communication skills and frequent cooperative learning opportunities
...to provide a safe learning environment where creativity and innovation are celebrated and risk-taking is supported
...to foster intrinsic motivation and active involvement as students explore their own interests and develop their own talents
...to focus on student achievement of maximum intellectual potential through abstract, complex thinking and problem solving

ICS High Ability Program Goals

Provide a variety of appropriate support services for K-12 students identified as high ability, including but not limited to cluster grouping within grade levels, differentiated curriculum based on students' learning needs, and social/emotional supports for the unique needs of high ability students.

High Ability Definition

The Indiana Code defines a student with high abilities as 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 (IC 20-36-1-3).

High Ability Language Arts

A student should have the HA designation if he/she performs at, or shows the potential for performing at an outstanding level of accomplishment in language arts when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment and has educational needs that cannot be met through grade-level curriculum in language arts.

High Ability Math

A student should have the HA designation if he/she performs at, or shows the potential for performing at an outstanding level of accomplishment in math when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment and has educational needs that cannot be met through grade-level curriculum in math.

High Ability General Intellectual

A student should have the HA-General Intellectual designation if he/she performs at/or shows the potential for performing at an outstanding level of accomplishment in both language arts and mathematics when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment and has educational needs that cannot be met through grade level curriculum in language arts and mathematics.

Characteristics of High Ability (Gifted) Students

Gifted Child	Bright Child
Curious to know things	Just interested to know about things
Asks a lot of intellectual questions	Good in answering questions
Tend to be very methodical in questioning	Good in asking straight questions
Mentally very alert	Mentally very attentive
Physically very fickle and unstable	Very stable in actions
Always interested in playing	Always alert in a classroom
Full of wild and silly ideas	Very firm in ideas and expressions
Can participate in discussions	Needs encouragement from others
Enjoys learning new things	Contented with learning classroom lessons
Can easily initiate new projects	Needs support from teachers and parents
Can easily initiate interesting discussions	Needs support from teachers and parents
Enjoys learning but may not like schools	Enjoys school very much
Can draw from a pool of vast knowledge	Very good memory
Can manipulate information	Can easily absorb information
Beyond the group but does well in tests	Tops the group and test

High Ability Identification

Introduction

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, building configurations, demographics, etc. There are, however, best practices for identification; this document is based upon Indiana requirements and those best practices and is meant to be a guide in identifying high ability students for services in the general intellectual and specific academic domains.

High Ability Screening

All Kindergarten, Second graders, fifth graders, and students referred for testing in all other grades will be administered the CogAT Screener Form, a norm-referenced measure of aptitude/cognitive ability. Students who scored in the 80 percentile or higher on the CogAT screener will be eligible for the CogAT Battery Test, which will be given to eligible students towards the beginning of the second semester. Additionally, students will be administered the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Primary Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) in order to determine achievement designation.

K-4 High Ability Identification

There are three pathways in which students may qualify for the high ability program--aptitude, achievement, and qualitative..

Aptitude Pathway

Students who completed the CogAT Battery Test and scored at or above the 95th percentile for the quantitative reasoning portion or the quantitative plus nonverbal portions will be eligible for high ability placement in math. Students that were eligible for the CogAT Battery Test and scored at or above the 95 percentile for the verbal or the verbal plus nonverbal portions will be eligible for high ability placement in language arts.

Achievement Pathway

Students who scored above the 79th percentile on the CogAT verbal portion and scored at or above the 95th percentile on the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Primary Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) in both reading and language usage will be eligible for high ability placement in language arts. Students that scored above the 79th percentile on the CogAT quantitative portion and scored at or above the 95 percentile on the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Primary Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) in math will be eligible for high ability placement in language math.

Qualitative Pathway
If a student receives a score in the 90th-94th percentile on a norm-referenced measure of aptitude/cognitive ability or a nationally norm-referenced measure of achievement, the student will be considered for high ability based on the qualitative (descriptive) indicators in the domain being considered.

a. Portfolios, work samples, projects
b. Problem-solving activities that show superior reasoning ability
c. Recommendations from teachers and parents
d. Rating scale or checklist that rates learning characteristics and motivation of nominated students

Parent/Teacher Nomination

A parent and/or teacher with knowledge of a student's ability and aptitude is able to nominate that student for consideration into the ICS High Ability Program. The nomination must include current quantitative data from the student, including statewide standardized test scores (ex ILEARN) and normative test scores (ex: NWEA.) Qualitative evidence will also be required. (At least three reasons a student should be considered based on performance or aptitude.) Parents, teachers, or other adult who has considerable interaction with the student may fill out the "High Ability Nomination Form." The nomination form is largely built upon the research based Kingore Observation Inventory, and may be utilized in the blind committee selection process for students who will be potentially entering the program through the qualitative pathway. Given this instrument is based on observation, it is important that the form is filled out by someone extensively familiar with the student's behaviors and learning characteristics.

High Ability Programming

K-5 High Ability
Kindergarten students will be placed in classes based on their scores on the Kindergarten entrance assessment. First through fifth grade students will be placed in a high ability cluster group in the same class. Teachers of high ability classes or cluster groups will receive specialized training in meeting the unique needs of students under this category.

Middle School High Ability
At Irvington Community Middle School, students who are identified as high ability through the identification process at Irvington Community Elementary School will be placed in cluster groupings with their like-ability peers in all core classes (English language arts, math, science, and social studies.) Like their colleagues at ICES, the middle school teachers of all core classes will receive specialized training in meeting the unique needs of high ability students with an emphasis on differentiating instruction and accelerating curriculum. For students who do not transfer into ICMS from ICES, parents and teachers with a knowledge of student ability are able to nominate students for the ICMS high ability program using the nomination process cited in **Parent/Teacher Nomination** section of this document.

High School High Ability

Irvington Preparatory Academy offers college credit (ACP), honors, and advanced placement classes for students who are achieving at an advanced rate. Students also have the opportunity to take college classes off-site when a course is not offered and they show the potential to achieve at a higher rate of learning than IPA offers. Students have the opportunity to apply for admittance to the College Acceleration Workshop that provides students with access to all the above classes in addition to a small cohort and targeted mentoring. Students in the CAW program can graduate with up to four semesters of college credit. Students are able to graduate early and advance through the curriculum by taking classes early if they show the potential to be successful in a class.

Appeals Procedures

The Irvington Community Schools High Ability Identification Team implements a multifaceted identification process consistent with Indiana Code and Rules; it is based upon sound measures designed for use with high ability learners in order to find those students whose academic needs are far beyond those of typical students of the same age in our district.

An appeal process is in place in the event the High Ability Identification Team does not place a child in services and a teacher, parent, or other person close to the child challenges this decision.
An official written appeal using the "ICS appeals process and procedures form" must be filed within two weeks of the high ability parent notification date.

.An appeals process allows the committee to review further information that shows good cause to reconsider the selection criteria or, if deemed appropriate, evaluate additional support documentation to consider high ability identification.

Exiting Procedure

If a student, parent, or teacher believes a high ability placement for services is no longer appropriate, exit procedures will be as follows:
1. Arrange a conference with the parties involved, including the student, parent, administrator and the teacher(s) providing services.
2. Parent, student, and teacher examine issues of concern, discuss interventions that may be implemented, and agree on a probationary period to implement interventions. This period is to be no shorter than one grading period.
3. At the end of the probationary period, the high ability coordinator, parent, student, and teacher meet to review progress and to determine whether the student's instructional placement needs to be changed. If an exit is deemed appropriate, the parent is notified at this time.
4. Parent notification for exit and documentation of meetings/ interventions are both kept by the high ability coordinator.
5. The High Ability Coordinator removes the High Ability designation on Student Test Number in information database.

Resources for Parents

- Northwestern University Center for Talent Development offers high school credit courses online for grades 6-12. More information can be found on their website: http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/gll/.
- National Organization for the Gifted - http://www.nagc.org/ : This site offers information on national and local conventions, updates on legislation, resources for school and community groups, as well as curriculum standards for school districts.
- The National Research Center on Gifted/Talented - www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT : This site details findings from an ongoing longitudinal study of giftedness in children. Parent, school district, and research resources available.
- GT World - http://gtworld.org/ : Authored by parents, this site offers numerous text resources, web links, and curricular ideas gathered by parents of GT students all over the world.
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted - http://www.sengifted.org/ : Links to conferences, parent groups, text resources, and more regarding the emotional needs of gifted students. National Association for Gifted Children - Homeschooling article High Anxiety article
- Purdue University Gifted Education Resource Institute - Enrichment Programs http://geri.education.purdue.edu/youth_programs/SSAT/index.html

***Note: This High Ability Plan overview is being evaluated and updated over the 2026-2027 school year.**