

Rochester Community Schools

High Ability

Program Manual

K-12

2014-2015

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RCSC Mission Statement

Rochester Community Schools...inspiring individuals to learn, grow, and give.

RCSC High Ability Program Mission Statement

Rochester Community School Corporation (RCSC) recognizes that some students perform at, or show the potential to perform at, a level of accomplishment which is significantly above their grade level curriculum. These students are found in all socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. RCSC recognizes the need to identify these students through systematic, on-going procedures in order to develop their talents in the areas of math and/or language arts by providing appropriate educational experiences matching their academic ability and/or achievement.

High Ability Definition

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 with other students of the same age, experience, or environment; and is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests in these areas.

Indiana Code 20-36-1-3

And

- One whose educational needs and/or individual academic growth cannot be met through grade level curriculum.

A student can be designated as High Ability in either language arts (L-HA) or mathematics (M-HA), or in both areas (High Ability General Intellectual).

L-HA – High Ability Language Arts

A student should have the **L-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.

M-HA – High Ability Math

A student should have the **M-HA** designation if he/she performs at, or shows the potential for performing at an outstanding level of accomplishment in 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 mathematics.

HA – High Ability General Intellectual

A student should have the **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.

Program Goals

Goal #1 – High Ability students in grades K-12 will be identified regardless of gender, race, age or socio-economic background, with a multi-faceted assessment plan.

Strategies:

- An identification committee of teachers and administrators will use a designated plan to determine which students need high ability programming.
- Subgroup norms will be used to identify students with high ability within subgroups such as racial and socio-economic.

- All students in Kindergarten, 2nd, 5th, and 8th grades and students new to the corporation will be screened for high ability needs.
- The assessment plan will include an achievement assessment, an ability assessment, and an alternative assessment.
- The identification process used by the corporation will be shared with teachers and parents.

Goal #2 – Appropriate school staff will be trained to understand the needs and characteristics of students with High Ability.

Strategies:

- Student Services Professionals will be trained to understand the characteristics and the specific social and emotional needs of students with High Ability.
- Teachers will know the characteristics of students with High Ability.
- Teachers will continue to receive appropriate training in differentiated instruction and curriculum in the areas of language arts and math to specifically address the needs of high ability students.
- Teachers will be encouraged to take High Ability university classes and to work toward earning High Ability certification.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend High Ability workshops and conferences.

Goal #3 – Provide challenging, differentiated curriculum and instruction during the school day commensurate with the ability and achievement levels of students identified with high ability.

Strategies:

- Implement researched, best practices to differentiate instruction and curriculum for language arts and Math (flexible grouping, compacting, acceleration, extension of content, use of above grade-level materials, problem-based and project-based learning, individualized instruction, etc.).
- Create cluster groups in grades K-8 classrooms.
- Provide accelerated and/or advanced course offerings in grades 6-12.
- Offer dual-credit courses in 8th grade and High School.
- Provide post-secondary courses through distance learning opportunities.

Goal #4 – The High Ability Program will be reviewed and evaluated annually.

Strategies:

- The Broad-Based Planning Committee (BBPC), consisting of educators, parents, students, community members, and other stakeholders, will meet a minimum of once per year to review the High Ability Program.
- The High Ability Program will be evaluated annually by the district Instructional Team, using data showing the progress of students in the program.

Multi-Faceted Student Assessment Plan

During Kindergarten enrollment procedures each spring, all students will be screened with appropriate assessments and all parents will be asked for input concerning their child. In order to initially include all possible candidates for high ability identification, all Kindergarten students will continue to be screened in multiple ways and at various times during the Kindergarten year for letter and sound recognition, word recognition, reading level, and numeracy skills including both performance-based and potential-based assessments. In January of the Kindergarten year, a pool of 20-25% of students will be identified by teachers and administrators for Semester II math and language arts enrichment groups. In April of the Kindergarten year, students will be given additional assessments. Kindergarten teachers and administrators will meet again to identify students showing above grade-level achievement or potential for achievement who will need services in the High Ability program in 1st and 2nd grades. These students will be identified as High Ability – math, or High Ability – language arts, or High Ability – General Intellectual.

Students identified as “High Ability – General Intellectual” will be placed in a first grade High Cluster grouping classroom. Differentiated curriculum and instruction in math and language arts will not only provide these students with extensions of the grade level standards, but also with acceleration and above grade-level instruction, as needed. Students identified as “High Ability-math” or “High Ability-language arts” will receive above grade level instruction and curriculum as needed through ability groups throughout the school day.

Additional program options at the Kindergarten level include Early Entrance to Kindergarten, entering school directly into 1st grade, and content area acceleration or enrichment.

In spring of 2nd grade, students are screened with additional assessments. The building principal, 2nd and 3rd grade teachers, and High Ability Program Coordinator meet in April to assess programming needs for students including identifying students for the High Ability program for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. These students will be identified as High Ability – General Intellectual, or High Ability – math, or High Ability – language arts.

Students identified as “High Ability General Intellectual” will be placed in a grade level High Cluster grouping classroom. Differentiated curriculum and instruction will not only provide these students with extensions of the grade level standards, but also with acceleration and above grade-level instruction, as needed. Additional program options at this level include subject skipping and grade level skipping.

In 5th grade, all students will again be screened through assessments to find students who were not previously identified for the High Ability program who may have needs for services in this area. The building principal, 5th and 6th grade teachers, and High Ability Program Coordinator will meet in April to assess individual programming needs for students designated as “High Ability” as they move into the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades at the Middle School building.

In the Middle School grades, students will receive differentiated curriculum and instruction in either or both language arts and math as individually needed. This may

include cluster grouping for math or language arts, (which would include acceleration, differentiated curriculum and differentiated instruction). Additional MS High Ability services could include above grade-level instruction, subject skipping, subject replacement, and distance learning.

Students in the spring of 7th grade will be screened with the Orleans Hanna Algebra Prognosis test. Students showing readiness for Algebra may be placed into a high school Algebra I class in 8th grade.

In the fall of 8th grade, all students are once again screened using various standardized and local assessments. The building principal, 8th and 9th grade teachers, and High Ability Program Coordinator will meet in the spring to assess programming needs for students including identifying students for the High Ability program for high school. These students will be identified as High Ability – General Intellectual, or High Ability – math, or High Ability – language arts.

Students will be recommended for high school classes which provide appropriate advanced curriculum and instruction in either math or language arts. Differentiated curriculum and instruction will not only provide these students with extensions of the grade level standards, but also with possible acceleration and above grade-level instruction, as needed. Additional program options at this level include testing out of a course and enrolling directly in an advanced course, enrolling in dual college credit classes, and enrolling in college courses (distance learning or traveling to a nearby campus). Students identified as proficient in 8th grade Algebra I will be placed in advanced math classes throughout high school. Because Rochester is a New Tech High School, taught through a PBL format with rubrics allowing for differentiation in curriculum and instruction, students with High Ability in Language Arts are able to reach high levels of achievement in the integrated courses.

Curriculum & Instructional Strategies Plan

Rochester Community Schools uses flexibility to determine what will work best in meeting the individual needs of students. All students designated as High Ability will receive differentiated instruction and curriculum in the math and/or language arts areas through the possible service options listed below:

Grades K-5:

- Early Entrance to Kindergarten
- Skipping Kindergarten for direct placement in first grade
- Grade Skipping
- Subject Skipping
- Cluster groups
- Ability grouping by subject area
- Distance Learning
- Mentorships

Grades 6-8:

- Early Entrance to High School (possibly one semester of 7th and one of 8th)
- Grade or Subject Skipping
- Distance Learning

Mentorships

Grades 9-12:

Graduate high school in less than four years
Credit by Examination (Give credit without seat time, if proficiency is shown)
Advanced or Honors classes
Distance Learning courses from universities
Dual Enrollment in high school and college
AP (Advanced Placement) courses
Mentorships
Internships

Counseling & Guidance Plan

Rochester Community School Corporation supports the unique socio-emotional needs of high ability students. All Student Services Professionals (counselors and social workers) receive training regarding the characteristics of students with high abilities and their specific socio-emotional needs. They disseminate this information to parents, teachers and administrators as needed to provide for the needs of high ability students. To provide for personal/social development, career development, and academic development for high ability students, Student Services personnel may implement the following interventions as needed: classroom guidance lessons, counseling groups, individual counseling, parent/teacher meetings, and referrals to community agencies. High ability students may also be provided with college/career exploration and development experiences earlier than their same age peers and consistent with their strengths to fully develop their academic potential.

Systematic Program Assessment Plan

Program evaluation is undertaken to improve the effectiveness of services to students with high ability. Internal evaluation of all program components will occur yearly to assure that the High Ability program at Rochester Community Schools is consistent with the program's philosophy, goals, and standards. External program evaluation should occur every five years, with valid and reliable instruments used by individuals with expertise in the high ability education field. The results of any program evaluation should be presented to the local Board of Education and accessible to all constituencies of the program. The evaluation should include both strengths and weaknesses of the program, with implications for improvement and renewal over time.

Professional Development Plan

Students with High Ability in language arts and/or math should be served by professionals who are involved with ongoing professional development in the areas of differentiated content and instructional methods. Appropriate school personnel will

receive training through workshops, conferences, college courses, and local trainings (utilizing both the expertise of Rochester personnel as well as visiting experts in the High Ability field).

Broad-Based Planning Committee

The Broad-Based Planning Committee for Rochester Community Schools includes educators, parents, students, and community members who meet a minimum of once per year to monitor the direction of the High Ability program.

Appeal Procedures

If the parent or teacher of a child who was not recommended for the High Ability program wishes to appeal that decision, he/she should request a “High Ability Appeal” form from the building principal. Once the completed form is returned to the building principal, additional testing will take place with the student. The results of these additional assessments will be evaluated by the High Ability building team to make a decision about the appeal. This decision will be shared with the parent and teacher.

Exit Procedures

If a parent, teacher, or student believes a high ability placement is no longer appropriate, he/she may request a “High Ability Exit” form from the building principal. Parents, student, teacher and an administrator will meet to discuss the needs of the student and decide if he/she should be removed from the High Ability program. After a decision is made, the original form is sent to the HA district coordinator. The district HA coordinator will update student records.

HIGH ABILITY APPEAL FORM

This Appeal Form may be used by a parent, a teacher, or a student, to request that additional assessments be completed with the student named below.

Student name _____ Grade _____ Age _____

Name of person appealing _____ Date _____

This is an appeal to further assess the above student in the area(s) of:

___math or ___language arts or ___both

I believe he/she is performing, or shows the potential to perform at, an outstanding level of accomplishment; when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment. I also believe his/her individual academic growth cannot be met through grade level curriculum.

Reasons for the appeal: _____

Signed _____

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

School personnel conducting appeal _____

Decision: Student needs HA program Student does not need HA program

Send copy to district High Ability Coordinator. Place form in student's file.

HIGH ABILITY PROGRAM – EXIT FORM

This form may be submitted by a parent, teacher, or student who believes that placement in the High Ability program is no longer appropriate for the student named below.

Student name _____ Grade _____ Age _____

Person completing form _____ Date _____

HA Exit Meeting date _____

Discussion of evidence of student’s present levels and needs:

Those in attendance (*Parents, student, teacher, administrator, etc.*):

Decision: Student will continue in the HA program Student will exit the HA program

The decision to place a student into the High Ability program, or exit a student out of the High Ability program, will be made by the school only after careful consideration of the present levels of progress and the academic needs of the student.

Send copy to district High Ability Coordinator. Place form in student’s file.

_____ District High Ability coordinator updates student records in Harmony.