



HIGH ABILITY FAMILY HANDBOOK

HIGH ABILITY STAFF

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Edgelea High Ability Teachers

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Introduction

“Our highest responsibility, finally, unavoidably, is the stewardship of our potential---being all we can be.”

Marilyn Ferguson

The Lafayette School Corporation has a commendable record in its support of high ability education. It recognizes and appreciates the special talents of all young people and is dedicated to providing appropriate environments to nurture their talents. In 1986-87, LSC began providing self-contained classes for elementary students in grades 2-4 who were achieving one to two grade levels above their peers academically. The belief was and is that these children’s needs could best be met in a classroom with a specially trained teacher. Students in grade one who demonstrate potential are “clustered” with peers with a special first grade teacher. Students in grades 5-12 have been provided a variety of Excel, Challenge, and Honors course options and extra-curricular activities to enable them to develop their academic, artistic, musical, physical, and leadership talents. Beginning in 2008 high ability kindergarten students were placed in a full day program with enriched math and language arts experiences.

Edgelea Elementary School is the site for the magnet K-4 High Ability Program. Kindergarten students are identified as having academic potential and are placed with a trained kindergarten teacher for an advanced and enriched kindergarten program. First grade students showing a great deal of academic potential are clustered in a first-grade classroom with a trained teacher. Identified High Ability students in grades two through four either participate in a self-contained classroom with other identified students with a trained teacher. Beginning in 2017-2018, students that have been identified as high ability may be placed in a self-contained high ability classroom at Edgelea or they may be clustered in a heterogeneous classroom receiving differentiated instruction with a trained teacher. Those identified High Ability students in grades one through four and are clustered in a heterogeneous classroom may opt to stay at their home/neighborhood school to receive High Ability services.

The continuing success of the High Ability Program can be attributed to the hard work and collaborative efforts of teachers, students, administrators, parents, school board members, and the community. Curriculum and instructional activities within High Ability classrooms are accelerated at least one year, enriched, and differentiated with research and independent study as integral parts of each grade level’s program. An effort is made to integrate technology into the curriculum and authentic assessment techniques are also important program components.

Indiana Code for High Ability

“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.”

(Indiana Code 20-36-1-3)

The Lafayette School Corporation accepts this definition and further adds:

“a high ability student requires services and educational experiences not ordinarily offered in the regular school curriculum to develop demonstration or potential aptitudes and talents.”

Characteristics of Gifted

- Quick Learner
- Alert
- Large Vocabulary with strong verbal skills
- Easy Acquisition of Abstract Ideas
- Vivid Imagination
- Wide Range of Interests
- Thinking is Abstract, Complex, Logical, or Insightful
- Intense Feelings/ Emotions
- Concern with Social or Political issues or Moral Justice
- Impulsive or Eager/ Spontaneous
- Asynchronous Development
- Self-Critical/Perfectionism
 - Conveys and Picks Up Humor Well
- Creative/Original
- Insatiably Curious
- Excellent Memory
- Advanced Comprehension
- Enjoys Problem Solving
- Desire to Organize
- Asks Probing Questions
- Highly Sensitive
- Idealistic
 - Atypical Connection of Ideas
- Strong Determination
- Keenly Observant
- Desire to Learn
- Strong Responses to Stimuli (Overexcitabilities)
- Leadership Ability

Program Goals

The Goals for the Lafayette School Corporation's High Ability Program are:

1. High ability students will pursue challenging, differentiated curriculum that will allow them to become independent learners.
2. High ability students will discover and understand their own uniqueness and will display positive self-concepts as they pursue their individual interests and needs, and develop innovative products.
3. High ability students will understand divergent views and respect individual's viewpoints as they cooperatively and responsibly interact with their communities.
4. High ability students will utilize higher level thinking skills and meta-cognitive processes in their pursuit of mastering advanced content.
5. High ability students will display a multi-cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity within a global perspective.

Programming Options

Elementary (K-4)-

<u>Cluster grouping at the child's home school</u>	Students who score in the 90 th -94 th percentile on placement tests or do not wish to leave their home school placement are put into cluster class at their home school. Those identified students receive differentiated instruction as well as extension activities from their teacher.
<u>Self-Contained High Ability at Edgelea</u>	Students who score in the 95 th percentile or above on placements tests have the option to be placed in self-contained grade level magnet classes at Edgelea Elementary.

Intermediate/Jr. High School (5-6)/ (7-8)

<u>Challenge</u>	Students identified and placed in this program can be in either or both STEM (Math and Science) or Humanities (English Language Arts and Social Studies) classes. Students in these classes not only work at a grade level above with a faster pace and higher expectations.
<u>Excel</u>	Students identified and placed in this program can be in either or both STEM (Math and Science) or Humanities (English Language Arts and Social Studies) classes. Students in these classes not only work at a grade level or two grade levels above with a faster pace and higher expectations.

High School

<u>Honors Classes</u>	Courses that move at an accelerated pace and can cover greater material. The content provides rigorous study in the particular content area.
<u>AP Classes</u>	These courses give students the opportunity to take course comparable to college level classes. These courses are more rigorous and are often recognized by colleges during the admissions process. Each course concludes with AP exams or an assessment to demonstrate mastery of course content.
<u>Dual Credit</u>	Dual credit courses allow students to earn college credit from Ivy Tech Community College, Purdue University, or Vincennes University before graduating high school. Before entrance, prerequisite courses and other requirements must be completed.

HOMEWORK PHILOSOPHY

Homework is an expected part of the High Ability Program. It is expected that students will do the work independently with little or no parent intervention. Each grade level in the High Ability Program has a consistent homework routine and an expectation policy in place. Practice and reinforcement at home of skills learned in school provides a beneficial connection for the High Ability student. Each student is given an assignment notebook to write down homework assignments each day. Here are some specific guidelines:

- Homework helps each child learn study skills and organization and how to become a more independent learner.
- Each teacher has a policy in place for late or missed assignments.
- Please check with the teacher and become familiar with his/her expectations.
- In Kindergarten, first and second grades, teachers and parents help more with organization and responsibility so students can learn to be consistent with turning in assignments.
- By third and fourth grades, the teachers expect the children to be more independent and become responsible for all of their work, for example: filling out their own assignment notebooks, completing assigned work and turning it in on time and packing their own backpacks at home and at school each day.
- The amount of time spent on homework varies by grade level, night, and the child. Here are some guidelines:
 - Grades K & 1 = 15-20 minutes
 - Grades 2 & 3 = 20-45 minutes
 - Grade 4 = 45 minutes
- If your child is CONSISTENTLY spending longer each evening than the teacher expects, please let the teacher know.

Identification Process

Students are identified for screening at any time during the school year when recommended by a parent, their teacher, or themselves. Program identification is multifaceted and uses the following instruments for elementary and intermediate school:

High Ability Identification in Math

- Through Ability: A score of 95th percentile or higher on a norm-references measure of non-verbal cognitive ability for self-contained services. A score of 90th-94th percentile on a norm-references measure of non-verbal cognitive ability for cluster services.
- Through Achievement: A score of 95th percentile or higher on a measure of math achievement for self-contained services. In the Lafayette School Corporation, we use the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) assessments. A score of 90th-94th percentile on a measure of math achievement for cluster services.
- Through Additional Data: When a score on either the ability or achievement assessment does not meet criteria for either the self-contained or cluster model, then additional data is required. This additional data may consist of teacher rating scales, work samples, and/or additional assessment measures. These additional data pieces will be reviewed to determine appropriate placement for possible high ability identification.

High Ability Identification in Reading

- Through Ability: A score of 95th percentile or higher on a norm-references measure of verbal cognitive ability for self-contained services. A score of 90th-94th percentile on a norm-references measure of verbal cognitive ability for cluster services.
- Through Achievement: A score of 95th percentile or higher on a measure of reading and language achievement for self-contained services. In the Lafayette School Corporation, we use the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) assessments. A score of 90th-94th percentile on a measure of reading and language achievement for cluster services.
- Through Additional Data: When a score on either the ability or achievement assessment does not meet criteria for either the self-contained or cluster model, then additional data is required. This additional data may consist of teacher rating scales, work samples, and/or additional assessment measures. These additional data pieces will be reviewed to determine appropriate placement for possible high ability identification.

Kindergarten

At registration (Kindergarten roundup), parents are asked to fill out interest in our high ability program. Additional information is then provided to families and parents can sign up for a screening day and time. Students are tested by the program assistant using the KBIT-2. Scores are reviewed, and parents are notified of student acceptance.

Grade 1

During the previous school year, all Kindergarten students are given the CogAT Battery in early spring of their Kindergarten year. Teachers are also asked to nominate students they believe would qualify in early spring. Cognitive and achievement data is gathered for each of those students. An identification committee reviews those scores at the end of the year. Those students meeting criteria mentioned above will be placed in either a self-contained or a cluster model classroom for first grade.

Grade 2

First grade teachers are also asked to nominate students they believe would qualify in early spring. Data is gathered for each of those students. A committee meets and reviews all required data to determine placement in either self-contained or cluster model classrooms.

Grade 3

Students also take the CogAT Battery test during early spring of their 2nd grade year. Additionally, we ask teachers to provide any additional needed information. Those students meeting criteria mentioned above will be placed in either a self-contained or a cluster model classroom for third grade. An identification committee reviews ability and achievement scores at the end of the 2nd grade year.

Grade 4

Teachers are asked to nominate students in early spring of the 3rd grade year. Again, data is collected and gathered for review. A committee meets at the end of the year to analyze data. If it is determined placement is needed in either self-contained or cluster model classrooms, that change is made.

Intermediate/ Junior High

In intermediate and junior high, the multifaceted identification process continues through 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.

- Through Ability: All 4th and 6th-grade students are given the CogAT test in the fall. A score of 95th percentile or higher of non-verbal cognitive ability for self-contained services. A score of 90th-94th percentile on a norm-references measure of non-verbal cognitive ability for cluster services.
- Through Achievement: A score of 95th percentile or higher on a measure of math achievement for self-contained services. In the Lafayette School

Corporation, we use the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) assessments. A score of 90th-94th percentile on a measure of math achievement for cluster services.

- Through Additional Data: When a score on either the ability or achievement assessment does not meet criteria for either the self-contained or cluster model, then additional data is required. This additional data may consist of teacher rating scales, teacher recommendation, work samples, and/or additional assessment measures. These additional data pieces are reviewed to determine appropriate placement for possible high ability identification.

A placement committee meets in spring to review data and determine placement for each student. Some courses in junior high are eligible to be taken for high school credit.

Grades 9-12

Students in grades 9-12 self-select honors and AP courses. Counselors fill out a form to identify students based on grades, teacher recommendations, past ability, and achievement assessment scores. Students must have at least three data points to be identified as high ability.

New to Lafayette School Corporation Students

When students are new to the Lafayette School Corporation, parents can request screening be done for high ability placement. Parents can make this request by contacting the High Ability office at 765-771-6036. Transcripts from previous schools attended shall be shared with Lafayette School Corporation. Students will be screened using multiple assessments consisting of NWEA, CogAT, or KBIT. Placement will be determined after screening is complete.

Appeals

Parents/Guardians who disagree with the identification of their child must submit in writing an appeal form stating the reasons they believe their child should receive high ability services. The High Ability Appeal Committee will review the student's records and make a determination. In some cases, the administration of additional tests of ability or achievement may take place. The high ability coordinator will notify the parent/guardian of the decision. Appeals will be considered up to July 1st. No further appeals will be considered after July 1st. Appeal forms are available on the Lafayette School Corporation Website

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. ARE YOU SURE MY CHILD BELONGS IN A HIGH ABILITY PROGRAM?

Your child was carefully identified for the High Ability Program based on standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, parent recommendations, checklists, and assessments given by the High Ability Program. Students are tested in grades K, 2, 4, and 6 for the following school year to determine placement. We continually look at students throughout the school year. We use several ability and achievement tests to help with the placement. A committee meets to review data to determine placement. We feel that this program is well-suited to your child's needs. Relax and allow your child time to adjust to new surroundings. If after the first grading period you still have concerns, please express these to your child's High Ability teacher.

2. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS OPTIONS?

Some students will be in the high ability program at Edgelea Elementary School. Edgelea is our magnet school for the program. Students can be in Language Arts and/or Math. We will also have cluster high ability classes. These classes will be at each individual student's home school. There are designated high ability teachers at each elementary school in each grade level. Again, students can be in Language Arts and/or Math in the cluster high ability classes. Finally, students can also be placed in the general education classrooms.

3. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO EACH OF THE OPTIONS?

The options cater to the student's academic needs by differentiating instruction to meet and challenge the academic ability of each student. Those in the magnet program will be in a self-contained classroom with other high ability students who tested at a similar percentile. This will provide an environment where students will challenge one another through collaboration and cooperative learning. The clustering model will place in students in a general education classroom with other identified high ability students and will receive enriched and differentiated programming within that classroom that will meet their needs to promote academic growth.

4. CAN I REQUEST A DIFFERENT OPTION FOR MY CHILD? IF SO, HOW?

If your child does qualify for the Edgelea magnet program or the elementary level cluster group, you will be informed. There will be an enrollment form for parents to fill out which gives permission for the enrollment. If you do not wish for your child to be in either the magnet or the cluster program, please indicate this on the enrollment form. If your child did qualify for the magnet program at Edgelea but you wish to keep your child at his/her home school in the cluster program, this is also an option.

4. MY CHILD IS NEW TO THE PROGRAM AND MISSES HIS/HER OLD FRIENDS AND/OR SCHOOL?

Encourage your child to play with neighborhood friends, participate in scouts, athletic activities, etc. with his/her old friends while developing new friends in his/her current class.

5. YOUR CHILD SAYS, "I'M NOT THE BEST (FASTEST, SMARTEST, ETC.) ANYMORE."

Please remind your child that everyone has strengths and weaknesses and in varying degrees. We are all different and that is okay! This new learning environment provides a special situation where students with many talents and abilities are grouped together to learn, grow, and share.

6. HOW DO I HANDLE MY CHILD'S FIRST LOW SCORE OR GRADE?

Remind your child that everyone makes mistakes, and we learn a great deal from our mistakes. Grades are not a reflection of him/her personally but a method to show how well he/she is performing. Help them keep it in perspective. Remind them to ask for help if they need it.

7. MY CHILD HAD AN ASSIGNMENT LAST NIGHT THAT HE/SHE HAD NO IDEA HOW TO DO, AND IT SEEMED TOO DIFFICULT?

Homework is a direct extension of classroom instruction. Frequently, the assignment was started in class and a process for completing the assignment was taught and discussed. Ask your child to explain the process. If after a reasonable amount of time your child is still unable to complete the assignment, please send the teacher a note.

8. HOW MUCH HELP SHOULD WE GIVE ON PROJECTS AND ASSIGNMENTS?

Assignments are designed for the children. Parents may provide guidance and explanations. Organization and time management need constant reinforcement from parents.

9. HOW CAN I HELP AT SCHOOL?

We welcome your help at school! You can visit anytime. Please let the teacher and the school know you are coming so when you arrive the children are in the classroom and not in a special class, attending a special event or testing. Please make sure you sign in at the office and have a background check on file. Talk with your child's teacher about specific opportunities to help in the classroom.

10. HOW DOES MY CHILD'S CLASS AND THE REGULAR CLASSROOMS INTERACT?

All grade level children have recess and lunch together each day. We often take grade level field trips and work together on special projects.

11. WILL MY CHILD AUTOMATICALLY CONTINUE IN THE PROGRAM NEXT YEAR?

Evaluation is an on-going process. The corporation continually looks at students in every grade level from year to year. We ask for teacher recommendations as well as parent recommendations. We do a cognitive ability test with all K, 2nd, 4th, and 6th grade students. Students in grades K-6 will take the NWEA throughout the year. This is an achievement test that will also help with placement. Provided your child has a successful year, there is no cause for concern. **High Ability students are expected to maintain a “B” average throughout the year.** Your child’s teacher will contact you if she/he has specific concerns. A nine-week intervention plan may be put in place if your student requires additional support. Placement reassignment for a student is a case by case determination.

12. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR THE HIGH ABILITY PROGRAM?

In considering data about children’s achievement, we recognize that in the Lafayette School Corporation are many students who are not identified as high ability. These students are certainly high achievers and may even earn straight A’s on their report, but do not meet Lafayette School Corporation’s specific criteria for high ability identification. All of the students will receive the appropriate level of challenge whether they are identified as high ability or not.

Since there are many high achieving students, the curriculum and instructional strategies are designed to meet their needs. The teachers differentiate to provide instructional experiences to meet student needs within each classroom. High achieving students may receive enrichment throughout the school day and during the small group instruction block. Each student shall be instructed in small groups within his or her classroom at the appropriate instructional level.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

1. **The High Ability Program Office at Edgelea Elementary School**

2910 South 18th Street
Lafayette, Indiana 47909

There is a supply of books for parents of gifted children on such topics as perfectionism, parenting tips, counselling needs, etc.

Call Mandy Fisher (765)771-6029 or Diana Cavanaugh for more information (765)771-6036.

2. **The Indiana Association of the Gifted** www.iag-online.org

A group of parents and educators state-wide who advocate for gifted and talented children. A newsletter entitled *Images* is produced four times each year and a state-wide conference for teachers and parents is held each March or April in Indianapolis.

3. **The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC)**

1707 L Street, NW, Suite 550
Washington DC 20036 (202)785-4268
www.nagc.org

A national group of educators, parents, and university personnel dedicated to improving educational opportunities for the nation's gifted and talented youth. This organization sponsors a yearly national conference and two publications: *Gifted Child Quarterly* and *Parenting for Potential*.

4. **The Gifted Education Resource Institute**

Purdue University
1446 Liberal Arts and Education Building
West Lafayette, IN 47907
(765) 494-7236

GERI provides summer programs and Super Saturday programs. You can contact Dr. Marcia Gentry, the Director of GERI for additional information.

5. **Hoagies' Gifted Education Page**

www.hoagiesgifted.org

Welcome to **Hoagies' Gifted Education Page**, the all-things-gifted site, full of resources, articles, books and links to help and support parents, teachers, and gifted children alike. Pick your entrance, but explore them all!