

High Ability Program

Clark-Pleasant Community Schools

Clark-Pleasant Mission Statement: The mission of the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation is to provide an educational program that enables students to make positive contributions to society. They should be challenged to excel as responsible lifelong learners, held accountable for setting and achieving personal goals, and develop positive self-esteem.

High Ability Mission Statement: The Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation's high ability program will identify students and offer a continuum of services to develop talent, to enrich, extend, and accelerate student learning. Through a rigorous and differentiated academic curriculum, individual students will be challenged to reach their highest potential.

High Ability Program Goals:

- Provide a consistent and challenging curriculum for identified high ability students.
- Promote differentiation, excellence, and rigor in the curriculum.
- Promote collaboration with classroom teachers of high ability students.
- Promote understanding of high ability students' learning needs.
- Promote the unique social/emotional needs of high ability students.
- Promote instruction, which fosters the areas of critical and creative thinking, independent research and inquiry.
- Identify a sub-group of gifted students when appropriate.

Indiana Department of Education's Definition of High Ability: "High ability student" means a student who:

- (1) 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
- (2) Is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

District Overall Philosophy for High Ability Students K – 12:

We believe it is important for high ability students to have an enriched and challenging curriculum at every level. In order for us to meet the needs of these students we provide advanced experiences and differentiate the curriculum they receive on a daily basis. We provide opportunities for them to interact with intellectual peers in a variety of ways.

In general, a high ability student in Clark-Pleasant Community Schools will have an ability score (commonly called an intelligence score) at or above the 95th percentile. These students typically score at or above the 95th percentile on standardized achievement tests for math and/or language arts. Teacher observation and student performance levels are all considered when identifying students for programming. The Clark-Pleasant high ability program targets students for math and/or language arts in grades K – 6. In the middle school, programs begin to be more class specific. High school students can widen their range of interests with advanced placement courses in all content areas, as well as, dual credit courses where college credit can be earned.

K-4 High Ability Identification & Placement

At the elementary level in Clark-Pleasant Community Schools, students are identified for High Ability Math and/or High Ability Language Arts. Students are then clustered together in one or more homerooms and the teacher provides an accelerated and more complex curriculum in the areas of math and/or language arts. Students continue to participate in grade appropriate Science, Social Studies, and various grade level activities.

Many Clark-Pleasant elementary high ability teachers have had additional coursework toward their professional licenses in the area of high ability. All teachers are highly qualified and are able to provide the most effective strategies and activities for high ability students. Professional development (attending workshops, seminars, trainings) is an important expectation for the teachers as we continue to learn more and more about these exceptional children. All elementary teachers have been trained to recognize the characteristics and special needs of high ability students.

Kindergarten to 1st Grade Identification Process:

Clark-Pleasant Schools recognizes the unique abilities of all of our kindergarten students. At the beginning of the year all kindergartners are assessed on reading and math skills to determine their level of proficiency. Teachers then vary their instruction based on the various levels of student ability. Students are assessed throughout the school year for evidence of growth and progression. Lessons are differentiated to provide challenging activities and opportunities for extra practice, depending on what each learner needs. Kindergarten students engage in open-ended activities, journal writing, computer programs, and tiered work stations as part of the differentiated curriculum they receive on a daily basis. Kindergarten students are not officially identified as “high ability” until second semester so we have more of an accurate picture of a student’s ability.

The first step of the identification process occurs during the first semester when kindergarten teachers use the Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI), which is a research-based observation tool to identify students who have gifted characteristics. Over a six-week period in November and December, all

kindergarten students participate in enriching open-ended activities. The teachers are trained to observe behaviors that exceed the level and complexity of what is typical for the age group.

All kindergarten students will be given an ability test, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). A student's beginning or the year and middle of the year scores from DIBELS Next will also be reviewed in both math and language arts. A corporation Identification Committee (which consist of high ability licensed teachers from each elementary, a building administrator, and a central office curriculum staff) will meet in April to identify kindergarten students for high ability programming based on all of the assessment information gathered. This identification process is done "blindly" by the committee, which means names of students and schools are not revealed until after placement decisions are made.

The designation will carry over to first grade where he or she is placed with a cluster of other high ability students in a first grade classroom. It is typical that a relatively small number of students are identified in kindergarten and that the number increases each year as the screening and identification process is repeated.

1stGrade to 2nd Grade Identification Process:

Students who were identified as high ability in kindergarten will be placed with a cluster of other high ability students in first grade. Students are assessed throughout the school year for evidence of growth and progression. Teachers will vary their instruction based on the various levels of student ability. Lessons are differentiated to provide challenging activities and opportunities for extra practice, depending on what each learner needs. First grade students will engage in open-ended activities, journal writing, computer programs, and tiered work stations as part of the differentiated curriculum they receive on a daily basis.

All first graders take the DIBELS Next assessment at set times throughout the year and these assessments become one piece of the data used in the identification process for grade two. When determined appropriate and with parent permission, the CogAT will be given to nominated students.

A corporation Identification Committee (which consists of one high ability licensed teacher from each elementary, a building administrator, and a central office administrator) will meet in April to identify first grade students for high ability programming based on all of the assessment information gathered. This identification process is done "blindly" by the committee, which means names of students and schools are not revealed until after placement decisions are made.

The designation will carry over to second grade where he or she is placed with a cluster of other high ability students in a second grade classroom. It is typical that a relatively small number of students are identified in first grade and the number increases each year as the screening and identification process is repeated.

2nd to 3rd Grade Identification:

Previous DIBELS Next assessment and current information gathered by classroom teachers surrounding Grade 2 Essential Learnings help make up the profile that is reviewed for future student identification for high ability identification.

The Identification Committee (which consists of one high ability licensed teacher from each elementary, a building administrator, and a central office administrator) will meet in late May/early June to identify students for high ability programming based on all of the assessment profile information gathered. This identification process is done “blindly” by the committee, which means names of students and schools are not revealed until after placement decisions are made.

3rd to 4th Grade Identification:

Third graders begin taking the state tests including ISTEP and IREAD3. This information, along with all other previous assessment information, will be included in the identification process. The needs of students in grades 3 and 4 who qualify for the high ability program will be met in one or more of the placements listed below:

Placement Options:

- Cluster Grouping – identified high ability students are grouped together in a classroom or classrooms. The schoolwide cluster grouping model is a research-based model used for classroom placements that help all students make maximum growth. Each classroom at each grade level has either a group of high ability students or a group of high achieving students, along with other students of mixed ability. All Clark-Pleasant elementary teachers are highly qualified to differentiate instruction and to challenge all learners. Those teachers with the high ability cluster have received additional training on the unique needs of high ability learners. Cluster grouping is the preferred option at Clark-Pleasant because there is no limit to the number of students that can be served with rigorous, differentiated instruction.
- Flexible Instruction Group – during a particular subject, e.g. math or reading, all teachers of the same grade divide all the students into instructional groups according to skill level and provide differentiated instruction for each leveled group.
- Subject Skipping – on occasion some students go to a different grade level for instruction.

4th to 5th Grade Identification:

Each December all fourth graders take a test (InView) which provides an overall ability score of a student (commonly called an intelligence score). All of the previous high ability identification information is used to determine the best program options, so the high ability students’ needs for complex learning can be met. The high ability identification continues to be based on the three components of achievement, ability, and qualitative measures as described above.

