

Hammond Academy of Science and Technology

High Ability Program

2025-2026



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Hammond Academy of Science and Technology

High Ability Program

Mission

HASTs High Ability Program will meet the intellectual, social and emotional needs of high ability learners in the corporation by providing alternate educational opportunities focused on accelerated and/or enriched curriculum for students in grades 6-12.

District Definition of High Ability Students

A student with high abilities is 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.

Program Goals

- To provide high ability learners intellectual, social, and emotional support allowing them the opportunity to meet his/her potential.
- To challenge high ability students to meet their academic potential through intensive curriculum expectations.
- To build capacity by providing high ability learners a foundation for success to prepare them for their next grade level.

Description of Services

Grades 6-8

- Grades 7 Pre Algebra and Grade 8 Algebra. Grade 7 Honors ELA and Grade 8 PreAP ELA.

Grades 9-12

- AP Seminar Grade 10. PreAP ELA grade 9. Grade 9 Honors Geometry.
- AP classes offered in Economics, Modern History, pre-calculus, Calculus and Biology, Honors classes in ELA 10-12.
- Dual credit courses in Advanced Lit/ Comp, PLTW, Calculus and Government.

Beliefs

We believe that high ability students

- are not all alike. They vary in respect to general ability, domain-specific aptitude, interests and predispositions, motivation and personality;
- benefit from interaction with peers. Intellectual peerage contributes to important growth patterns in all subject areas (Kulik & Kulik, 1992);
- need various forms of acceleration throughout the school years, ranging from content acceleration to Advanced Placement or dual enrollment to mentorships (Shiever & Maker, 2003, Renzulli & Reis, 2003; Clasen & Clasen, 2003);
- are capable of producing high level products in specific areas of learning at the level of a competent adult (NAGC, 1990);

- need to be challenged and stimulated by an advanced and enriched curriculum that is above their current level of functioning in each area of learning (Van Tassel-Baska, 2003); and
- have affective characteristics that render them vulnerable in school settings such as perfectionism, sensitivity, and intensity (Lovecky, 1992; Robinson, 2002).

Goals

- Bring together students of high ability in order to be challenged and stimulated by students of similar ability.
- Provide accelerated and differentiated academic opportunities for students of high intellectual and academic achievement.
- Offer a rigorous academic curriculum which will prepare students for learning opportunities at the next level.
- Provide students with opportunities to learn how to learn, which requires organizational skills, study skills, and persistence in the face of difficulty.
- Address the social and emotional needs of students through peer interaction and fostering a sense of community.
- Offer an environment where high ability students are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Program Evaluation

HAST, using student achievement data and input from various stakeholders, continuously evaluates its high ability program for quality and effectiveness (*Master Checklist*)

Master Checklist of High Ability Program Elements for Self-Assessment

Program Design Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
There is a written philosophy and/or mission statement related to HA students.				
There is a written definition of which students the district considers to have what particular needs that require specialized services.				
There are written goals and objectives for these services.				
There is a written description of the services to be provided for the described students at each grade level and in each area served.				
Services provided align with how high ability is defined.				
High ability students are grouped together for instruction in their area(s) of talent.				
Services are constructed so that there is a continuum of services to meet the broad range of needs of individual high ability students.				
Policies are in place to allow early entrance, grade skipping, subject skipping, early credit, and early graduation according to individual student need.				
The roles of personnel at the district, the building and the classroom are clearly defined.				
A district-wide stakeholder group exists and meets on a regular basis to review the district services for high ability students.				
Identification Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
The district uses a norm-referenced measure of ability in each of the areas for which program services are offered (i.e., math, language arts).				
The district uses a norm-referenced measure of achievement with adequate ceilings to assess achievement about the grade level in each of the areas for which program services are offered.				
The district uses qualitative indicators of ability to perform in each of the areas for which program services are offered.				
The procedures ensure that all students have an opportunity to be nominated for screening by				

publicizing the process and receiving nominations from all stakeholders groups.				
Students are identified in all grade levels for which services are provided.				
The formal identification process is repeated at targeted grade levels including, but not limited to, kindergarten, 2 nd grade, prior to placement for middle school, and prior to placement in high school.				
The appeals process is publicized.				
The appeals process allows for students to take alternative ability, achievement, and/or qualitative measures at no cost to the family.				
The exit procedure includes period of intervention no less than one grading period to determine if student can be successful in the program with supports.				
Curriculum and Instruction Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
There is a written curriculum in core subject areas and other areas served by the district that is specific to students identified as high ability K-12.				
Student learning goals are clear, and evidence of how the learning will be demonstrated is clearly stated.				
The written curriculum has clear evidence of vertical articulation from grade to grade and K-12.				
There is clear evidence of acceleration of curriculum in areas served.				
There is clear evidence of enrichment of curriculum in areas served.				
Instruction and learning experiences are clearly differentiated to focus on higher order thinking.				
There is evidence of teaching of communication, collaboration, research, critical thinking, and problem solving.				
The pace of instruction is appropriate for high ability students.				
There is evidence of student use of technology for creating content, learning content, and communicating content.				
Assessments are aligned to curriculum goals.				
Pre-assessment is used to determine individual instructional plans.				
Post-assessment is used to demonstrate student growth and attainment of stated learning goals.				
Affective Needs Items	No	Some	In	Comments

	Evidence	Evidence	Place	
A written, differentiated, affective curriculum is available and used by teachers that addresses social and emotional needs of high ability students.				
Affective curriculum teaches students about social and emotional characteristics as well as potential issues that may face.				
Documentation of differentiated college guidance for high ability students is available (e.g. fieldtrips, independent study projects, speakers, or shadowing experiences pertaining to college exploration).				
Documentation of differentiated career guidance for high ability students is available (e.g. fieldtrips, independent study projects, mentors, speakers, or shadowing experiences pertaining to college exploration).				
Professional Development Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
Personnel working with high ability students are provided with opportunities for continuing professional development in the area of high ability education.				
Parents of high ability students are provided with opportunities for professional development about the characteristics and needs of this population.				
Program Evaluation Items	No Evidence	Some Evidence	In Place	Comments
The district uses multiple strategies to assess high ability student performance and growth.				
All components of the high ability program are periodically reviewed by individuals knowledgeable about high ability learners and who have competence in the evaluation process. The results are used for continuing program involvement.				
The evaluation report for all educational services involving high ability students includes both strengths and areas of challenge of the program and is accompanied by a plan with implications for improvement and renewal over time.				
The results of the program evaluation are presented to the local school board, the stakeholder group, and accessible to all constituencies of the program.				

Checklist is taken from Speirs Neumeister, K. & Burney, V. (2012). *Gifted Program Evaluation: A Handbook for Administrators and Coordinators*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press. Used with permission of Prufrock Press.

2025-2026
HAST Identification

- There are two ways the State of Indiana recognizes a high-ability student.
 - As per Indiana Code 20-36-1, a high-ability student is defined as one who performs at or shows the potential for performing at an outstanding level of accomplishment when compared with other students of the same age, experience, or environment.
 - Because of these two paths to identification, the assessment process is multifaceted and required at least two forms of assessment: a measure of performance (adaptive formative assessment) and a measure of the potential to perform (verbal and quantitative reasoning assessment)

NEW STUDENT HONORS PLACEMENT (High Ability Programming)

NEW student placement of students NOT previously identified in a High Ability

- Copies from the most recent standardized tests must be submitted to the school in which the student is enrolling. Testing records will be requested from the former school. However, to expedite the placement process, parents may submit these records as well.

Information should include

- Academic Performance testing: Reading, language, and math test scores from a recognized standardized test such as NWEA, Stanford Achievement Test, California Test of Basic Skills, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, or Woodcock-Johnson.
- Academic Potential testing (Ability): CogAT, Inview (CSI), Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, Wisc III, Stanford Binet, or Naglieri Non-Verbal,

NEW students who are ALREADY FORMALLY IDENTIFIED as High Ability or in an Honors Program

- If your child has already been identified as a high-ability student in another school district, he or she will also be considered for similar placement at HAST upon enrollment.
- Each school district in Indiana establishes an identification plan for high ability that is appropriate for that district's student population. It is very possible that a student who is qualified as high ability in one district may or may not qualify in another district
- When you enroll your child at the middle school level, his or her records will be reviewed to determine if your former school district used criteria similar to what is used by HAST and what placement would be most appropriate here in HAST to ensure continued academic success. If your child's ability and achievement levels meet or exceed the HAST criteria for high ability identification, then he or she will be identified as a high ability student.
- If it is determined that your child does not currently meet the HAST criteria for high ability, then he or she will be reconsidered each spring.

HAST Middle School High Ability Programming

Students placed in our middle school high ability program will experience an accelerated and differentiated curriculum specifically designed for students with high ability

Advanced clusters and enrichment classes incorporated into current classes offered at the 7th and 8th-grade levels include language arts, and math (pre-algebra is offered in 7th and Algebra for 8th grade for high ability students).

Mathematics: Students who take high ability pre-algebra in the 7th grade are placed in high ability algebra in the 8th grade. The regular middle school algebra class offered is the same course offered to freshmen at HAST HS. The high school may require the student to retake algebra if he/she receives a C or lower average for the school year.

Grade 6-8 Honors (High Ability Programming)

Current HAST students can be reevaluated to be added or exited.

In order to make an informed decision, the following information will be collected.

- **NWEA 85% or better in content area**
- Current Math/ ELA Grade 80 percentile or better
- ***Teacher Recommendation: Classroom teachers will be given a google form to supply data for addition or exit from the program.***

NEW STUDENT HONORS PLACEMENT (High Ability Programming)

NEW student placement of students NOT previously identified in a High Ability or Honors Program

- Copies from the most recent standardized tests must be submitted to the school in which the student is enrolling. Testing records will be requested from the former school. However, to expedite the placement process, parents may submit these records as well.

Information should include

- Academic Performance testing: Reading, language, and math test scores from a recognized standardized test such as NWEA, Stanford Achievement Test, California Test of Basic Skills, Iowa Test of Basic Skills or Woodcock-Johnson.
- Academic Potential testing (Ability): CogAT, Inview (CSI), Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, Wisc III, Stanford Binet, or Naglieri Non-Verbal,

NEW students who are ALREADY FORMALLY IDENTIFIED as High Ability or in an Honors Program

- If your child has already been identified as a high-ability student in another school district, he or she will also be considered for similar placement in HAST upon enrollment.
- Each school district in Indiana establishes an identification plan for high ability that is appropriate for that district's student population. It is very possible that a student who is qualified as high ability in one district may or may not qualify in another district
- When you enroll your child at the middle school level, his or her records will be reviewed to determine if your former school district used criteria similar to what is used by HAST and what placement would be most appropriate here in Hanover to ensure continued academic success. If your child's ability and achievement levels meet or exceed the HAST criteria for high ability identification, then he or she will be identified as a high ability student.
- If it is determined that your child does not currently meet the HAST criteria for high ability, then he or she will be reconsidered each spring.

HAST High School Placement High Ability Programming

At HAST, we provide a rigorous academic curriculum designed to prepare students for advanced course work at the secondary and post-secondary levels. We offer a variety of advanced courses designed to challenge and prepare students. Students who are successful in an advanced course possess strong language arts and/or math skills, a high degree of self-motivation, and the ability to work independently as well as collaboratively. All of these courses are based on the Indiana Academic Standards and fulfill the graduation requirements. Beyond freshman year, high-ability students can advance into additional honors courses in English and Math as well as AP English and mathematical coursework along with multiple other AP courses. High-ability high school students with questions about appropriate options and prerequisites for placement should consult their school counselor.

Math (High Ability Programming)

Current HAST students can be reevaluated to be added or exited.

Continuation of Honors Placement

In order to make an informed decision, the following information will be collected.

- Algebra 1 95%
- NWEA 84th Percentile
- Must Pass Algebra 1 Exam (8th grade)

English Honors (High Ability Programming)

- Current ELA grade 85% or better
- NWEA 85th Percentile

NEW STUDENT HONORS PLACEMENT (High Ability Programming)

NEW student placement of students NOT previously identified in a High Ability or Honors Program

- Copies from the most recent standardized tests must be submitted to the school in which the student is enrolling. Testing records will be requested from the former school. However, to expedite the placement process, parents may submit these records as well.

Information should include:

- Academic Performance testing: Reading, language, and math test scores from a recognized standardized test such as NWEA, Stanford Achievement Test, California Test of Basic Skills, Iowa Test of Basic Skills or Woodcock-Johnson.
- Academic Potential testing (Ability): CogAT, Inview (CSI), Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, Wisc III, Stanford Binet, or Naglieri Non-Verbal,

NEW students who are ALREADY FORMALLY IDENTIFIED as High Ability or in an Honors Program

- If your child has already been identified as a high-ability student in another school district, he or she will also be considered for similar placement in HAST upon enrollment.
- Each school district in Indiana establishes an identification plan for high ability that is appropriate for that district's student population. It is very possible that a student who is qualified as high ability in one district may or may not qualify in another district
- When you enroll your child at the middle school level, his or her records will be reviewed to determine if your former school district used criteria similar to what is used by HAST and what placement would be most appropriate here in HAST to ensure continued academic success. If your child's ability and achievement levels meet or exceed the HAST criteria for high ability identification, then he or she will be identified as a high ability student.
- If it is determined that your child does not currently meet the HAST criteria for high ability, then he or she will be reconsidered each spring.

Testing Instruments

Research supports a set of specific procedures for identifying students with high abilities in an equitable, fair, and valid manner. High ability manifests itself in different ways in different cultures or socioeconomic groups. Multiple criteria are used, including both qualitative and quantitative measures of student achievement and potential.

Instrument	Description	Purpose	Grades Tested
Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)	Measures verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal reasoning abilities	Identify students for placement in high ability program	Screening as needed
ILEARN	Criterion referenced; measures achievement of academic standards	Determine mastery of grade level standards in math, language arts, science, and/or social studies	6-8
NWEA	Criterion referenced; measures achievement of standards and growth	To measure growth over time	6-11
PSAT	Criterion referenced; measures achievement of academic standards	Determine mastery of grade level standards in math, language arts,	8-11
ILEARN BIO	Criterion referenced; measures achievement of academic standards	Determine mastery of grade level standards in science,	10
ILEARN Check Points	Criterion referenced; measures achievement of academic standards	Determine mastery of grade level standards in math, language arts, science, and/or social studies	6-8

Traits of High Achievers, Gifted Learners and Creative Thinkers

A High Achiever	A Gifted Learner	A Creative Thinker
Remembers the answers	Poses unforeseen questions	See exceptions
Is interested	Is curious	Wonders
Is attentive	Is selectively mentally engaged	Daydreams, may seem off task
Generates advanced ideas	Creates complex, abstract ideas	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed
Works hard to achieve	Knows without working hard	Plays with ideas and concepts
Answers questions in detail	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives	Inject new possibilities
Performs at the top of the group	Is beyond the group	Is in own group
Responds with interest and opinions	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows	Questions: What if?
Needs 6-8 repetitions to master	Needs 1-3 repetitions to answer	Questions the need for mastery
Comprehends at a higher level	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas
Enjoys the company of age peers	Prefers the company of intellectual peers	Prefers the company of creative peers, but often works alone
Understands complex, abstract humor	Creates complex, abstract humor	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor
Grasps the meaning	Infers and connects meaning	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments	Initiates more projects than will ever be completed
Is receptive	Is intense	Is independent and unconventional
Is accurate and complete	Is original and continually developing	Is original and continually developing
Enjoys school often	Enjoys self-directed learning	Enjoys creating
Absorbs information	Manipulates information	Improvises
Is a technician with expertise in the field	Is an expert, abstracting beyond the field	Is an inventor and idea generator
Memorizes well	Guesses and infers well	Creates and brainstorms well

Is highly alert and observant	Anticipates and relates conversations	Is intuitive
Is pleased with own learning	Is self-critical	Is never finished with possibilities
Gets A's	May not be motivated by grades	May not be motivated by grades
Is able	Is intellectual	Is idiosyncratic

©Kingore, B. (2004) *Differentiation: Simplified, Realistic, and Effective*. Austin: Professional Associates Publishing. Chapter: "Understanding and Accommodating Advanced Potential," p. 47.

Placement Re-Evaluation

HAST Placement Re-evaluation

A student's admission and continuation in the high ability program is based on several factors, including test scores, classroom performance/grades, task commitment, participation, teacher/parent input, and overall academic progress and benefit to the student. High ability programs are designed to meet the needs of high-performing students. The parent or teacher may request a re-evaluation of the student's progress and placement within the program.

Phone calls, parent-teacher conferences, and written communication should occur first to resolve concerns about the student's participation in the program.

If initial communications do not resolve concerns, the parent, student (if appropriate), teacher, and building principal will meet. A written intervention plan, including the duration, will be created. The teacher will communicate the student's progress to the parents throughout the intervention period, including a formal written report midway through the intervention period. At the end of the period, the student's classroom performance will be re-evaluated in a second meeting of the same individuals.

If the parent, teacher or administrator determines that the student should be withdrawn from the program, s/he completes the Exit Request form and submits it to the building principal and high ability program coordinator. Any disagreement with the placement decision may be submitted, in writing, to the high ability program coordinator.

Student Name _____ Teacher _____
Grade _____ School _____
Conference #1 Date _____
Conference #2 Date _____

Signatures below indicate participation in conferences to evaluate the student's progress in the program and creation of an intervention plan to support the student's success in this program.

Parent Signature _____

Teacher Signature _____

Principal Signature _____

Additional comments may be included on the back.

HAST HIGH ABILITY

Intervention Plan

Academic and/or behavioral performance in which progress is needed:

Interventions to be implemented by the school to support the student in areas listed above:

Interventions to be implemented at home to support the student in the areas identified above:

Date of intervention period _____ to _____

Midpoint Teacher Report of Student Progress

Student progress in the areas listed in the intervention plan:

Further recommendations, if any, to assist the child in making the needed progress to be successful within the program:

Date of teacher midpoint communication to parent _____

Exit Guidelines

Students may be re-evaluated if the following occur:

- Falling below the 85th percentile on a norm-referenced standardized test
- Not achieving a Pass+ score on ILEARN
- Falling below the 85th percentile in math and/or language arts in the regular classroom
- Falling below the 85th percentile in math and/or language arts in the high ability classroom
- Difficulty keeping up with the class work and the challenges of the class

A result of the re-evaluation could include:

- Interventions to evaluate and correct the problem. At this point, the parent will be contacted.
- Removal from the High Ability program if interventions are not effective. A conference will be held with the high ability teacher, general education teacher, and the high ability coordinator to discuss the removal of the student from the high ability program
- Removal from the program will be considered with substantiated documentation

Appeal Process

If your child is denied admission to the HAST High Ability Program, there is an appeal process.

The Appeal Form must be completed by the parent/student and submitted to the High Ability Coordinator within two weeks of receiving Notification of Placement letter. The student will then be scheduled to participate in an end of year assessment for the current grade level in language arts or mathematics. They will also be given a writing prompt to complete if the appeal is for reading. The student must receive a 90% or better on the end of year assessment AND/OR a score of a 5 or 6 on the writing prompt.

All data for the student will be reviewed by the High Ability Coordinator, building principal, and the High Ability teachers.

The appeal process is the final determination of the student's status.

HAST
Placement Appeals Process

Student's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: (____) ____ - ____

Present Grade: _____

Teacher(s): _____

In the space below, indicate which class or course(s) you are appealing to be admitted:

In the space below, please explain why you feel an appeal for admission into the High Ability Program should be reviewed for the student: _____

Name of person completing this form: _____ Date: _____
(print name)

Signature of person completing this form: _____

Signature of student (if over 18): _____

Submit this form and supporting data to:

Deborah Snedden / Superintendent
dsnedden@hammondacademy.org

Glossary of Terms Related to High Ability Programs

Accelerated Learning – Pacing students through the curriculum at a rate appropriate to their advanced ability. Students may or may not be formally identified as high ability to participate in some forms of accelerated learning.

Advanced Placement – Any of over 30 courses endorsed by the College Board in which a secondary student can earn college credit by successfully meeting criteria established by higher education institutions on a nationally given and scored Advanced Placement examination. Students also earn high school credit upon successful completion of the course(s).

Cluster grouping - An educational process in which small groups of identified gifted and talented (GT) and/or high ability students are assigned to an otherwise heterogeneous classroom within their grade.

Differentiation – Adapting the curriculum to meet the unique needs of learners by making modifications in complexity, depth, and pacing. It may include selecting, rather than covering all, the curriculum areas dependent on the individual needs of students. In Indiana Administrative Code, “Differentiated” means providing tiered levels of services for all educational needs.

Domain – As used in Indiana Code, “domain” includes the following areas of aptitude and talent, general intellectual, general creative, specific academic, technical and practical arts, visual and performing arts, and interpersonal.

Dual Credit – Students earn both high school and college credit while enrolled in a course.

Early Entrance – Students begin their elementary school or college education prior to the designated chronological age of entrance.

Enrichment – Activities that supplement the core curriculum. Such activities are generally not specified in the curriculum and are selected by the teacher and/or students in a given classroom.

Flexible Grouping – Grouping students by ability or readiness level. Groups can be formed and reformed to meet varied instructional purposes. Ability grouping is not synonymous with “tracking.”

Grade Skipping - Students’ progress through grade level instruction skipping one or more grades.

Heterogeneous/Homogeneous Grouping – Grouping heterogeneously generally occurs by chronological age level and without regard for the diverse needs of students, their learning styles, or their interest. Homogeneous grouping is based on common criteria such as the students’ interests, special needs, or academic abilities.

High Ability Student – In Indiana Code “High Ability Student” means a student who performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, and outstanding level of accomplishment in at least one (1) 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)

Nomination – A referral process for consideration of a student into a specialized program.

Off-Grade Level Tests – A test one or more grade, or age, level(s) above the student’s actual grade placement or age used to assess a student’s ability or achievement.

Program for High Ability Students – According to Indiana Administrative Code, “Program” means educational services differentiated in depth and breadth designed to meet the needs of one (1) or more high ability students through activities, such as compacting, acceleration, enrichment, problem solving, and creative thinking.

Self-Contained Classroom – A programmatic term defining a homogeneous setting of students with common needs and/or abilities. The class can include multiple grades or ages.

Adapted in part from the Indiana Association for the Gifted (IAG) *Resource Guide for Indiana Parents and Teachers*, 2nd Edition

