SILVER CREEK
SCHOOL CORPORATION

High Ability Program Handbook

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Program Design

The Silver Creek School Corporation's program for high ability education is rooted in the district's belief statements.

District Commitment
The entire staff in SCSC provides an instructional program based on a rigorous curriculum. Our administrators and teachers have collaborated to develop a curriculum that aligns with state and national standards for implementation in each Silver Creek School classroom.

Student Engagement
Silver Creek teachers work together within their Professional Learning Community to engage students daily with research-based instructional strategies. Teachers maintain active student engagement by:

1. Setting the stage
2. Explaining to students what to do
3. Modeling for students what to do
4. Using Guided Practice
5. Using Independent Practice
6. Using Closure and Assessment

Our Professional Learning Community supports and helps teachers check for understanding. The process is ongoing and based on shared responsibility for student success.

Silver Creek's district-level program design encompasses policies and procedures for the following areas: *Identification, Curriculum and Instruction, Counseling and Guidance, Professional Development, and Program Evaluation.* These program components will be described in greater detail throughout this document.

Program Administration

Silver Creek's program for high ability education is facilitated by a High Ability Coordinator, a broad-based planning committee (BBPC), and classroom teacher leaders. Each component of the high-ability administrative body has specific responsibilities to meet the needs of the district's high ability population.

The roles and responsibilities of the High Ability Coordinator are as follows:

- *Manage Indiana's High Ability grant, which includes submission of grant proposal, implementation of activities and programs outlined in the grant, completing the End of Year Report, communicating with the Indiana Dept. of Education's Center for Exceptional Learners regarding grant proposal, and securing funding for the program*
- *Communicate with district stakeholders, including the Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Corporation Treasurer, Director of English Language Learners, and Director of Special Education*

- *Provide district and building-level professional development*
- *Disseminate information from the Indiana Department of Education to the BBPC regarding the High Ability mandate and serving the needs of high ability students*
- *Coordinate the Identification Process for high ability eligibility*
- *Communicate with parents the results of HA identification and SCSC HA programming*
- *Coordinate and facilitate BBPC meetings*
- *Communicate the needs of HA students with each building's leadership team*
- *Provide resources and support for building-based teachers of high ability students*
- *Facilitate both internal evaluations (annual) and external evaluations (no less than every 5 years)*

Silver Creek's **Broad-Based Planning Committee (BBPC)** for high ability education comprises building administrators, district administrators, classroom teachers, school counselors, parents, community members, and school board members. The committee meets at least once a year to make informed decisions about the direction of the district's high ability program. The BBPC sets goals for the program, facilitates its evaluation, and develops and reaches a consensus on the district plan for high ability education. The BBPC serves as a resource for the district's High Ability Coordinator, parents, and the broader community.

Identification Plan

The process for identifying students who qualify for high ability programming is inclusive. Schools within the Silver Creek School Corporation have a responsibility to actively seek out students who may require high ability programming. Multiple measures of academic ability and cognitive potential, including student products, aptitude test scores, achievement test scores, and evaluation instruments specifically designed to assess gifted or high ability characteristics, are used to identify those who require services. These instruments are research-based and designed to be inclusive of students who may be economically disadvantaged, have a language barrier that could impact performance on more typical measures of high ability, or have a twice-exceptionality.

Students who are newly enrolled in the district are also eligible for high ability programming. An appropriate referral from a recognized referral source, coupled with student products that demonstrate exemplary performance in math or language arts, warrants consideration for high-ability services.

The state of Indiana categorizes gifted students in three areas: High Ability-General Intellectual, High Ability-Math, or High Ability-Language Arts. Inclusion within any of these domains requires that the student:

"…. performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment and whose educational needs and/or individual academic growth cannot be met through grade level curriculum."

Furthermore, a student is considered High Ability if she or he:

"…. demonstrates outstanding potential or performance according to school corporation criteria on an alternate form of assessment, such as peer evaluation, self-evaluation, teacher recommendation, parent recommendation, product or portfolio assessment, rating or observation scales, interviews, or performance assessment."

With these state guidelines for identification in mind, Silver Creek School Corporation uses the following indicators as part of a multi-faceted plan for identifying students in need of services for academic abilities:

- Nominations from self, peers, teachers, administrators, or parents-Grades K-12
- Academic Achievement Grades K-12
- Group Administered Achievement Tests: IOWA, gr. K-2, Ilearn Checkpoints, gr. 3-8
- Group Administered Norm-Referenced Aptitude Assessment – CogAT, Grades K, 2, & 5
- Writing samples or other student products K-12
- Screening Instruments, Rating scales, Surveys, Inventories, etc., are available to gather individual data on students who are being evaluated for high ability services

To determine eligibility for high ability programming, a student assessment profile is developed and maintained. This profile may include the referral source, any assessments used to determine eligibility, and the high ability learner's interests, learning style, and educational needs. Only staff members who have a role in providing services to students will have access to assessment results regarding eligibility.

Assessment Plan

Qualifications

Multiple sources of information are used to identify students. Outlined below are the assessments and prerequisites for qualification. The High Ability Coordinator reviews this information to determine the most suitable placement.

Elementary

Students in Kindergarten, 2nd, and 5th grade take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) to fulfill the IN DOE aptitude requirement. Students in grades 3-8 take the ILearn, fulfilling the IN DOE achievement requirement. Students in grades K-2 who score within the proximal eligibility range on the CogAT will be given the IOWA TBS as a measure of achievement.

Kindergarten:
K students are given the CogAT screener. Students scoring in the top 25% using local norms receive the full CogAT battery.
Students in the 95th percentile or higher on the full battery CogAT, when compared nationally with their age-level peers in Verbal, Quantitative, or Quantitative/NonVerbal Composite scores on CogAT, automatically qualify for high ability programming.
Students in the 90th- 94th percentile are considered and may qualify based on their achievement scores and/or teacher input, as well as classroom performance.

2nd, 5th, and *8th Grades:
Students in the 95th percentile or higher, as measured by Standard Age Score (SAS) or higher, when compared nationally with age-level peers in Verbal, Quantitative, or Quantitative/Nonverbal Composite scores on the CogAT, automatically qualify for high ability programming.
Students in the 90th-94th percentile are considered and may qualify based on achievement scores, teacher input, and classroom performance.
*Students will be screened in 8th grade by a referral from a teacher, parent, or self. Consideration will be given specifically to those students who are new to SCSC since the 5th-grade CogAT testing, those in the MLL program, and students in advanced classes not currently identified.

Students not in the tested grade levels (K, 2, 5, & 8*) can request testing at any time and be considered for High Ability services through a student, parent, or teacher referral to the High Ability Coordinator.

Venture Program Eligibility

Those students who have been identified as High Ability in grades K-8 will, in the spring of the 8th grade, receive an invitation to enroll from the Coordinator of the Venture Program at Silver Creek High School. Should the number of students accepted be limited, priority will be given to those designated as High Ability General Intellect and High Ability Language Arts, as the Venture Program aligns with the Social Studies curriculum.

Elementary Appeals Process

An appeal can be initiated by either the parent or a school employee. The initiator of the appeal should contact the High Ability Coordinator for the appeal form. In addition to the narrative form, other documentation such as student products, classroom assessments, standardized assessments, and recommendation letters should be submitted to the High Ability Coordinator. A building-level committee will review the student's appeal and communicate the determination for services to the child's parent.

Secondary Appeals Process

Beginning in the 7th grade, a student may initiate an appeal to be included in advanced/honors courses. A parent can initiate the appeal but must include documentation supporting the claim. The principal, a teacher of Honors courses (preferably HA licensed), and the counselor (in consultation with the High Ability Coordinator, if desired) will review the request and meet with the parents to discuss the appropriate placement.

Exit Procedure

It is essential to remember that cognitive growth is not always consistent, and therefore, such placement is not necessarily permanent. Placement decisions may be modified as students' learning profiles change over time in elementary and middle school.

Students who are not performing at the expected level in the identified area will be taken through the Response to Intervention (RtI) process. After appropriate interventions are implemented and data are gathered, a committee, including the classroom teacher, principal or designee, and High Ability Coordinator, will determine the appropriate placement.

Parents/Guardians may request that their child be removed from the High Ability program. This is to be a written request to the High Ability Coordinator. The principal or their designee, the High Ability Coordinator, the classroom teacher, and the parent/guardian will meet to determine the appropriate placement.

Curriculum and Instruction Plan

Students who have been identified for high ability programming receive instruction in Language Arts and Math designed to meet their academic needs. These research-based best practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Standards-based curriculum mapping*
- *Differentiation of instruction in content, process, and product*
- *Curriculum Compacting*
- *Acceleration*
- *Critical and Creative Thinking*
- *Higher Order Questioning*
- *Inquiry-Based Learning*
- *Standards-based assessments through the Indiana Curriculum Accountability Network (ICAN)*
- *Grade level and cross-grade collaboration meetings between teachers*

Through the lesson planning process, teachers can address individual learning styles and levels of content mastery. With this information, teachers can create differentiated instructional experiences to meet the needs of high ability learners in the classroom.

The table below provides a general overview of courses of study and instructional experiences offered to students identified as high ability. Levels of service each student may need are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Grade level	***LA/Math Enrichment***	***Acceleration***
K-6	Differentiated curriculum for high ability learners. Instructional practices may include learning centers or stations, open-ended tasks, product options, research and independent study, inquiry-based learning, and flexible and/or cluster grouping of high ability learners. Instructional materials are available that cater to students' interests and achievement levels.	Curriculum compacting, pre-assessment, and tiered instruction. *Decisions regarding early Kindergarten entrance and grade skipping in grades K-6 are made on a case-by-case basis.*

7-8	Differentiated curriculum for high ability learners. Instructional practices may include learning centers or stations, open-ended tasks, product options, research and independent study, inquiry-based learning, and flexible and/or cluster grouping of high ability learners. Advanced core curriculum classes. Instructional materials are available that cater to students' interests and achievement levels.	Curriculum compacting, pre-assessment, and tiered instruction. Honors ELA is offered in Grades 6-8, Advanced Math is offered in Grade 6, Pre-Algebra is offered in Grade 7, and Algebra I is offered in Grade 8. Spanish I/II offered in Grades 7 & 8. Computing Foundations is offered in Grade 7.
9-12	Dual Credit and AP offerings- Please see SCHS Website for current offerings.	

Counseling and Guidance Plan

Many high ability students have unique characteristics that merit attention from our counseling and guidance departments. Generally speaking, academic provisions such as the ability to learn with others of similar interests, abilities, and drive, having learning experiences presented at appropriate levels, and flexible pacing of the curriculum can be of great benefit in meeting the social and emotional needs of high ability students. Some studies suggest that these students may require additional support to manage their heightened sensitivity, perfectionist tendencies, peer relationships, and career and post-secondary education planning. Furthermore, Silver Creek's educational staff and counselors will be aware of students in special populations who may require high ability programming. Special care must be taken to offer early identification and support to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who have limited English proficiency, or who experience learning or cultural differences.

Silver Creek School Corporation partners with Center Stone to support students' social and emotional needs. We have life skills experts and counselors at all levels of our educational programming (elementary, middle, and high). These services, along with our school counselors, provide SCSC students with social and emotional support throughout their educational careers.

All of Silver Creek's schools have counselors on staff who have had training on the affective development of children and young adults. Counselors participate in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) training throughout the year to deepen their understanding of the needs of high-ability students. Counselors provide staff with professional development to help teachers support the SEL needs of high ability students. The corporation's High Ability Coordinator continually provides school-based counselors with resources and professional development opportunities designed to better meet the needs of these unique students and their families. Each year, a portion of the corporation's state-based High Ability Grant is dedicated to professional development, including the district's counseling department.

Professional Development Plan

Professional development for Silver Creek's administrators, teachers, and instructional support staff is ongoing and comprehensive.

At the beginning of each school year, all instructional staff members participate in a full-day professional development session facilitated by district and building-based administrators. Staff members' activities and experiences are centered on meeting students' individual needs in the classroom, both educational and emotional.

Additionally, throughout the school year, teachers are provided with job-embedded time to collaborate with their grade-level colleagues to align curriculum and plan educational experiences for Silver Creek students. During professional development, instructional staff participate in ongoing discussions to continually improve our plan for meeting students' social-emotional wellness needs. Furthermore, every school is equipped with a trained school counselor.

Throughout the school year, instructional staff members receive professional development sessions focused on differentiation of instruction, standards-based assessment, and meeting the needs of all learners in the classroom. High Ability licensed teachers provide instructional guidance to classrooms with high-ability students, ensuring that non-negotiable skills are met at each grade level for these learners.

Teachers are also encouraged to participate in outside-district training. Dual-credit teachers at the high school level are credentialed through the post-secondary institution that awards the college credits. The Indiana Commission on Higher Education governs the credentialing requirements for post-secondary institutions. Other trainings include local (High Ability Bootcamp with Consultants for High Ability, Creative and Critical Thinking Workshops with Consultants for High Ability, Literacy workshops sponsored by INDOE), state (Indiana Association of the Gifted Conference), and national (National Association of the Gifted) sponsored professional development opportunities designed to enhance their understanding of high ability students in the cognitive, academic, socio-emotional, and artistic domains.

Program Evaluation Plan

The development of Silver Creek's comprehensive program design for high ability education was based on a needs assessment/self-evaluation that was provided by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). As a second evaluation tool, Silver Creek measures its program effectiveness against the "exemplary" program standards provided by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). The High Ability Coordinator documents program effectiveness by compiling a High Ability data report each January. This report is shared with the BBPC.

The district's broad-based planning committee for high ability education comprises district- and building-level administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. Each spring, the program's goals and objectives are evaluated by the broad-based planning committee to identify specific areas for improvement or gains to be celebrated. Evaluation of the High Ability

program is twofold: student progress, as measured by classroom performance, and district-level evaluations based on the performances outlined in the Indiana Standards for High Ability Education and the NAGC program performance standards.

As suggested by the IDOE, Silver Creek's program for high ability education is scrutinized by external evaluators approximately every five years. The findings of the external evaluations are reported in writing and in a public forum. The results of any evaluations are used to strengthen programs for the school corporation's high ability learners.