

Hammond Academy of Science and Technology

High Ability Program

2026-2027



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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.

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 rend them vulnerable in school settings such as perfectionism, sensitivity, and intensity (Lovecky, 1992; Robinson, 2002).

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.

High Ability Identification

Universal Screening and Ongoing Identification

HAST provides **100% of students** an opportunity to be considered for High Ability identification. Students will be reviewed upon entry to HAST and prior to transition to high school using available norm-referenced ability and achievement data. When valid norm-referenced ability data are not available, HAST **may administer the full CogAT**. Students may also be referred for consideration at any grade level through the multifaceted identification process.

Identification Committee

High Ability identification decisions will be reviewed by a HAST identification committee that includes the High Ability Coordinator, administrator(s), and appropriate instructional staff. Committee members will receive training in High Ability identification procedures and the use of identification data.

Indiana defines a High Ability student as one who performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment in at least one domain when compared with students of the same age, experience, or environment, and who is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

HAST uses a multifaceted identification process consistent with Indiana law and IDOE guidance. Identification considers multiple sources of evidence, including:

- A norm-referenced measure of ability/potential, including verbal and/or quantitative reasoning;
- A norm-referenced measure of achievement/performance in the applicable academic area; and
- When appropriate, qualitative evidence of exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

Students may be identified in High Ability–Language Arts, High Ability–Math, or High Ability–General Intellectual based on the criteria established by HAST and the identification pathways outlined by IDOE.

New Students Not Previously Identified as High Ability

For newly enrolled students who have not been formally identified as High Ability, HAST will first review available records and assessment data from the student's previous school.

- **Students transferring from an Indiana school** will have prior High Ability identification and available ability/achievement data reviewed and used whenever appropriate.

- **Students transferring from outside Indiana** who do not have an appropriate norm-referenced ability assessment will be administered the **CogAT** to provide verbal and/or quantitative reasoning data for the identification process.
- If an Indiana transfer student does not have adequate ability data available, HAST may also administer the CogAT as needed.
- Achievement data may include an approved norm-referenced measure such as Iowa Assessments, Woodcock-Johnson Achievement, or another IDOE-approved assessment.
- Qualitative information, including teacher or parent rating scales and observations, may be considered when additional evidence is needed.

Existing valid assessment data will be used whenever possible to avoid unnecessary retesting. Formal identification decisions will follow HAST's multifaceted identification process for High Ability–Language Arts, High Ability–Math, and High Ability–General Intellectual.

Advanced course placement is separate from formal High Ability identification and may be based on student readiness and applicable Indiana requirements.

New Students Already Identified as High Ability

Students who enter HAST with a documented High Ability identification from another school will have their records reviewed to determine the appropriate HAST services and placement.

- HAST will review the student's prior High Ability designation, identified domain(s), ability and achievement data, and previous services.
- Students previously identified in HA-Language Arts, HA-Math, or HA-General Intellectual will be considered for comparable HAST services in the identified area(s). Indiana requires identified students to receive appropriately differentiated instruction in their identified domain.
- Placement in a specific Honors, PreAP, AP, dual-credit, or advanced course will be based on the student's readiness, prior coursework, prerequisites, and available HAST programming.
- If records are incomplete or additional information is needed to determine appropriate services, HAST may gather additional assessment or qualitative information through its multifaceted identification process.
- Students will not be required to repeat identification testing solely because they transfer to HAST when sufficient valid documentation is available.

The goal of the review is to ensure continuity of appropriate High Ability services while determining the best academic placement for each student.

Middle School Grades 6-8 High Ability Identification Criteria and Services

HA–Language Arts

- 90th percentile or higher on an approved norm-referenced verbal reasoning measure; **or**
- 90th percentile or higher on both the Reading and Language Arts portions of an approved norm-referenced achievement measure.

HA–Math

- 90th percentile or higher on an approved norm-referenced quantitative reasoning measure; **or**
- 90th percentile or higher on an approved norm-referenced mathematics achievement measure.

ILEARN Checkpoints

For grades 6–8, a minimum of two ILEARN Checkpoints may be used as the achievement measure when permitted under current IDOE guidance.

Qualitative Pathway

Students who score within the assessment’s standard error of measurement of the HAST guideline may be considered using an approved qualitative measure of gifted characteristics.

HA–General Intellectual

Students must meet HAST identification criteria in both Language Arts and Mathematics.

HAST will use local norms when appropriate and available. IDOE requires districts to clearly identify the measures, grade levels, and parameters used in the selection process.

Grade 6 Services

English Language Arts:

High Ability ELA students will be cluster-grouped and provided instruction with increased depth, complexity, advanced texts, higher-level thinking, enrichment, and curriculum compacting when appropriate.

Mathematics:

High Ability and advanced math students will participate in an Advanced Math 6 pathway. Services may be provided through cluster grouping within the regular math classroom and will include compacting, enrichment, advanced problem solving, increased depth and complexity, and above-grade-level content when appropriate.

Students identified as HA-Math will receive the highest level of mathematics instruction available and appropriate to their demonstrated readiness, with differentiation, compacting, enrichment, and acceleration as needed.

Grade 7 Services

English Language Arts:

High Ability ELA students will be cluster grouped and provided advanced texts, deeper analysis, higher-level thinking, enrichment, and curriculum compacting when appropriate.

Mathematics:

High Ability and advanced math students will receive an advanced mathematics pathway through Pre-Algebra when enrollment and readiness support a separate course, or through cluster grouping and differentiated advanced instruction within Grade 7 math.

Grade 8 Services

English Language Arts:

High Ability students will have access to PreAP English with advanced texts, deeper analysis, writing, critical thinking, and enrichment. Other students who demonstrate readiness may also participate.

Mathematics:

High Ability and advanced math students will have access to Algebra I when appropriate. When the number of identified students is small, other students who demonstrate readiness may also be enrolled.

Additional Advanced Opportunities:

Grade 8 students may also access selected high school-level courses, including Etymology, 2D Art, and Geography. These opportunities are based on readiness and interest and are not limited to formally identified High Ability students.

Advanced Course Placement

Formal High Ability identification and advanced-course placement are separate processes. Students who are not formally identified as High Ability may still participate in advanced coursework when they demonstrate appropriate readiness or meet applicable Indiana advanced mathematics requirements.

Advanced Mathematics Automatic Enrollment: In accordance with IC 20-30-18-3, middle school students who achieve Above Proficiency on the ILEARN Mathematics assessment and earn a grade of C or higher in mathematics coursework will be automatically enrolled in an advanced mathematics course for the subsequent school year. Parents/guardians may opt out in accordance with Indiana requirements. High Ability identification and automatic advanced mathematics placement are separate processes.

Grades 9–12 High Ability Identification and Services

HAST continues to identify and serve High Ability students throughout grades 9–12. Formal High Ability identification is separate from placement in AP, PreAP, dual-credit, or other advanced courses.

Students not previously identified may be considered for identification using HAST's multifaceted process:

HA–Language Arts:

- 90th percentile or higher on an approved norm-referenced verbal reasoning measure **or** 90th percentile or higher on both Reading and Language Arts portions of an approved norm-referenced achievement measure.

HA–Math:

- 90th percentile or higher on an approved norm-referenced quantitative reasoning measure **or** 90th percentile or higher on an approved norm-referenced mathematics achievement measure.

Qualitative Pathway:

- Students within the assessment's standard error of measurement of the 90th-percentile guideline may be considered.

HA–General Intellectual:

Students must meet the criteria for both HA–Language Arts and HA–Math.

IDOE requires a norm-referenced ability/potential measure, achievement/performance measure, and qualitative evidence within the district's multifaceted identification system. Full CogAT is an IDOE-listed ability measure for grades K–12.

Grades 9–12 Services

High Ability students are provided advanced, accelerated, and enriched opportunities based on readiness, interests, prerequisites, and academic goals.

Opportunities include:

- PreAP English 9
- AP Spanish Language and Culture
- AP Biology
- AP Calculus

- AP Comparative Government and Politics
- AP English Language and Composition
- AP Macroeconomics
- AP Modern World History
- AP Music Theory
- AP Precalculus
- AP Seminar
- AP Statistics
- Dual Credit Calculus
- PLTW Dual Credit courses
- Entrepreneurship Dual Credit

Advanced coursework is **not limited to formally identified High Ability students**. Other students who demonstrate readiness may also participate.

Grades 6–12 High Ability Service Continuum

Grade	ELA Services	Math Services
6	Cluster grouping, advanced texts, depth/complexity, enrichment, compacting	Advanced Math 6 pathway, cluster grouping, compacting, advanced problem solving
7	Cluster grouping, advanced analysis, enrichment, compacting	Advanced math pathway; Pre-Algebra when appropriate
8	PreAP English and differentiated advanced instruction	Algebra I and advanced mathematics when appropriate
9–12	PreAP, AP, advanced coursework, enrichment and acceleration	AP, advanced and dual-credit mathematics, acceleration as appropriate

Grades 6-12 Counseling and Affective Support

HAST High Ability students in grades 6–12 have access to academic, career, and social-emotional support appropriate to their developmental needs. High Ability students receive academic and career counseling to support course selection, college and career planning, and postsecondary goals. Students also have access to the school social worker for support with affective needs such as perfectionism, stress, motivation, peer relationships, and balancing academic expectations. IDOE recommends systematic counseling and affective support for High Ability learners. Affective support may address developmentally appropriate topics such as perfectionism, stress management, motivation, self-advocacy, peer relationships, goal setting, college/career planning, and balancing academic expectations.

Testing Instruments

HAST uses multiple measures to identify students with High Ability in an equitable and appropriate manner. Measures may include ability/potential, achievement/performance, and qualitative evidence when additional information is needed.

Instrument	Description	Purpose	Grades
Cognitive Abilities Test – Full CogAT	Norm-referenced measure of verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal reasoning	Primary measure of ability/potential for High Ability identification	6–12, as needed
ILEARN Checkpoints & Summative	Measures achievement of Indiana Academic Standards	Achievement/performance evidence for identification and instructional planning	6–8, as applicable
PSAT/SAT Suite	Measures college and career readiness in reading, writing, and mathematics	Supporting information for academic planning, advanced-course readiness, and identification review	8–11
ILEARN Biology	Measures achievement of Indiana Biology standards	Supporting information for academic progress and advanced science placement	High School
Approved Qualitative Measure	Rating scale, observation, or performance evidence of gifted characteristics	Additional evidence for students whose scores fall within the standard error of measurement of HAST's identification guideline	6–12, as needed

HAST may also review valid norm-referenced ability and achievement assessments from a student's previous school. **CogAT may be administered when appropriate ability data are not available.**

Broad-Based Planning Committee

HAST maintains a Broad-Based Planning Committee representing school leadership, teachers, counselors, parents/families, students when appropriate, and other stakeholders. The committee meets at least annually to review High Ability identification, services, student outcomes, and opportunities for program improvement. The HAST Board approves the High Ability Program.

Professional Development Plan

HAST will provide ongoing professional learning related to the characteristics and needs of High Ability learners, identification procedures, differentiation, curriculum compacting, acceleration, and affective needs. Professional development will be provided as appropriate for administrators, teachers, counselors, and other staff serving High Ability students.

Program Evaluation

HAST will annually review the effectiveness of its High Ability Program using student growth and achievement, participation and success in advanced coursework, stakeholder input, identification data, and implementation of services. Results will be reviewed by the High Ability Coordinator and Broad-Based Planning Committee and used to guide program improvement.

Placement Review and Exit Procedure

A parent, teacher, administrator, or student may request a review of a High Ability student's placement when there are concerns about whether the current services continue to provide an appropriate academic fit.

When concerns arise:

- The student's academic progress and current services will be reviewed.
- The parent/guardian, teacher, High Ability coordinator, administrator, and student, when appropriate, will meet to discuss concerns.
- A written intervention and support plan will be developed and implemented for **at least one grading period**.
- Student progress will be reviewed at the end of the intervention period before any change in High Ability services is made.

A change in placement or exit from High Ability services will be based on the student's academic needs, progress, and benefit from the current programming.

Behavior, attitude, or compliance alone will not be used as reasons for removal from High Ability services.

HAST High Ability Intervention Plan

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

Date: _____

Area of High Ability Service: ☐ ELA ☐ Math ☐ General Intellectual

Area(s) of Concern

Describe the academic concern, current level of performance, and how the student is responding to the current High Ability services:

School-Based Supports/Interventions

Identify the supports that will be provided to help the student successfully access appropriately challenging instruction:

Student Supports/Goals

Identify goals or strategies the student will work toward during the intervention period:

Family Support, if appropriate

Identify any agreed-upon ways the family can support the student:

Intervention Period: _____ to _____

The intervention period will be no less than one grading period.

Midpoint Progress Review

Student progress toward identified goals:

Adjustments or additional supports recommended:

Date of midpoint communication with parent/guardian: _____

End-of-Intervention Review

At the conclusion of the intervention period, the parent/guardian, teacher, High Ability coordinator, administrator, and student when appropriate will review the student's progress and determine whether:

- ☐ Current High Ability services should continue
- ☐ Services should continue with additional supports
- ☐ A different High Ability service or placement is more appropriate
- ☐ Exit from High Ability services should be considered

Any decision will be based on the student's academic needs, progress, and benefit from the services provided. Behavior, attitude, or compliance alone will not be grounds for removal from High Ability services.

Exit Consideration Guidelines

A student's High Ability placement may be reviewed when there is evidence that the current services may no longer be the best academic fit. Concerns may include:

- A pattern of declining academic progress in the identified High Ability area;
- Ongoing difficulty accessing or benefiting from the advanced curriculum despite appropriate supports;
- Multiple sources of data indicating that a different instructional placement may better meet the student's academic needs.

Before a student is considered for exit:

- Parents/guardians will be notified and included in the review process.
- A written intervention and support plan will be implemented for at least one grading period.
- The student's progress will be reviewed using multiple sources of evidence.
- The parent/guardian, teacher, administrator, High Ability coordinator, and student when appropriate will meet to determine the most appropriate placement.

Possible outcomes include:

- Continuation of current High Ability services;
- Continuation with additional supports or a change in services;
- Placement in a different advanced learning option; or
- Exit from High Ability services when documented evidence shows another placement is more appropriate.

A single test score, classroom grade, behavior, attitude, or compliance issue will not automatically result in removal from High Ability services.

Appeal Process

Parents/guardians may appeal a High Ability identification decision by submitting a written appeal to the HAST High Ability Coordinator within two weeks of receiving notification of the identification decision.

The appeal should explain why the parent/guardian believes the original assessment results may not accurately reflect the student's abilities or achievement.

As part of the appeal process:

- HAST will review the student's existing ability, achievement, and relevant qualitative data.
- Additional information provided by the family may be considered.
- When sufficient evidence indicates that previous testing may not accurately reflect the student's ability or achievement, HAST may administer an alternative norm-referenced ability and/or achievement assessment at no cost to the family.
- A HAST identification committee with appropriate training in High Ability education will review the available data and make the final identification decision.

The appeal process applies to formal High Ability identification. Placement in Honors, PreAP, AP, dual-credit, Algebra I, or other advanced courses is a separate academic placement decision.

HAST High Ability Identification Appeal Form

Student Name: _____

Current Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Area Being Appealed:

- ☐ High Ability–Language Arts
- ☐ High Ability–Math
- ☐ High Ability–General Intellectual

Reason for Appeal:

Please explain why you believe the original assessment results may not accurately reflect the student's ability, achievement, or High Ability characteristics.

Additional information or documentation you would like the committee to consider:

Name of Person Completing Form: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Submit to:

Deborah Snedden, Superintendent/High Ability Coordinator
dsnedden@hammondacademy.org

Glossary of High Ability Terms

Acceleration – Providing instruction at a faster pace or at a more advanced level based on a student’s demonstrated readiness.

Advanced Placement (AP) – College-level courses offered in high school through the College Board. Students may earn college credit based on AP examination scores and individual college policies.

Cluster Grouping – Placing a group of High Ability or advanced learners together within a classroom so differentiated instruction can be provided.

Curriculum Compacting – Reducing or eliminating instruction in material a student has already mastered so time can be used for more advanced or enriched learning.

Differentiation – Adjusting the depth, complexity, pace, content, or learning experiences to appropriately challenge students.

Domain – The area in which a student is identified as High Ability. HAST identifies students in **Language Arts, Mathematics, and General Intellectual**. A General Intellectual designation means the student meets identification criteria in both Language Arts and Mathematics.

Dual Credit – A course in which a student may earn both high school and college credit.

Enrichment – Learning experiences that extend or deepen the regular curriculum through additional complexity, inquiry, problem solving, or exploration.

Flexible Grouping – Grouping and regrouping students according to readiness, instructional need, or learning goals.

High Ability Student – Under Indiana law, a student who performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment in at least one domain compared with students of the same age, experience, or environment and who is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

Norm-Referenced Assessment – An assessment that compares a student’s performance with the performance of other students in a defined norm group.

Qualitative Measure – An assessment such as a rating scale, observation, or performance measure used to provide additional evidence of a student’s gifted characteristics, particularly when quantitative scores fall close to the identification guideline.

Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) – The expected range of variation around a test score. HAST may consider additional qualitative evidence when a student’s score falls just below the identification guideline but within the assessment’s SEM