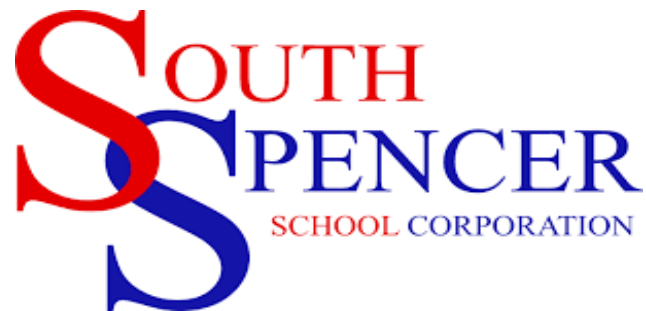


South Spencer School Corporation High Ability Handbook



ALL STUDENTS ~ ALL THE TIME

South Spencer School Corporation

321 S 5th Street, Rockport, IN 47635

Superintendent - Brad Schneider
Director of Technology & Facilities- Dean Schipp
Director of Curriculum & Instruction- Rebecca McCaffery

Phone: 812-649-2591 Fax: 812-649-4249

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Mission Statement

High Ability Mission Statement

The South Spencer School Corporation High Ability Program is dedicated to identifying and nurturing students with exceptional academic and intellectual abilities. Our mission is to provide enriching and accelerated learning opportunities that cultivate each student's unique talents while fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. By ensuring equitable access, personalized instruction, and a supportive learning environment, we strive to help high ability students achieve their full potential and become engaged, contributing members of their communities.

Definition

According to the Indiana Code 20-36-1-3, a High ability student means a student who 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 is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

Identification Process

Students in Kindergarten, 2nd, and 5th will take the CogAT 8-2024 norms. Students scoring at or above the 96th percentile in verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, or both will be identified as High Ability in the domain: Language Arts, Math, or General Intellectual. Kindergarten students will complete the CogAT in the spring, while 2nd and 5th grade students will participate in the fall. IXL scores are used as a second data point during the identification process. Parents will be informed of the assessments and if their child is identified. When a student's score falls just below the corporation's qualifying score, additional data will be reviewed to help determine appropriate placement.

Appeals Process

An appeal process is in place that a teacher, or parent challenges the decision to not place the student in High Ability services. Appeal must occur within 4 weeks from when the parent was notified of identification testing results.

1. The petitioner notifies the school principal of their request and the reason for it.
2. The principal will determine whether there are sufficient grounds to revisit the student's services.
3. If a review is warranted, the principal will contact the High Ability Coordinator.

4. The HA Coordinator will evaluate the available information to determine if additional testing is necessary. This review may include state-wide assessment data, district benchmarks, HA identification testing results, and student work samples.
5. The HA Coordinator will then communicate the final decision to the petitioner.

Exit Process

If a student, teacher, or parent believes a High Ability placement for services is no longer appropriate, he/she may initiate Exit Procedures. Students who are not successful with high ability placement may be exited from services at any time.

1. If a petitioner requests that a student be removed from High Ability services, a meeting will be convened to address concerns and consider appropriate interventions. The committee will include the High Ability teacher, parent or guardian, school principal, and High Ability Coordinator.
2. An intervention plan will be developed and implemented for a minimum of one grading period. After this period, the committee will review the student's progress to determine next steps.
3. If the student demonstrates improvement, additional support may be offered to continue their success. If the interventions are not effective, the student may be considered for exiting from the program.
4. If exiting is determined to be appropriate, the parent or guardian will sign the [Exit Form](#), and the High Ability Coordinator will be notified.

Broad Based Planning Committee

A Broad-Based Planning Committee is an advisory board who meets annually to review the High Ability program, recommend improvements, and ensure that the needs of High Ability students are being met through effective instructional practices and meaningful opportunities. The committee is represented by educators, parents, community members and other stakeholders. The corporation has ultimate responsibility to provide services and will make the final decisions regarding the best interests of the students.

Curriculum and Instruction Plan

The South Spencer School Corporation High Ability program provides services and opportunities for K-12 grade students.

Elementary School Models

Luce and Rockport provide an opportunity for early kindergarten entrance if data supports it. Elementary classes can provide a cluster model that is used when High ability students are grouped in the same classroom. Students move beyond grade level standards with differentiated experiences and continual monitoring with the classroom

teacher. A pull out model is used when the teacher works with students by differentiating instruction and pushing beyond the grade level standards outside of the classroom. In-class differentiation model is when the teacher offers individual differentiated instruction to students. Tier 2 or the Walk To Model in both elementary schools are included to meet the needs of all students in ELA and Math. Students are instructed at their academic level and progress monitoring occurs to ensure student growth. Data meetings are held with teachers, interventionists, and Academic Coach to ensure students are at their present level of instruction and groups align with current data.

South Spencer Middle School Model

Counselors, elementary social workers, teachers, and administrators will work to determine the appropriate placement of identified students. Students are able to enroll in pre-Algebra and Algebra 1. High ability students in Math and ELA classes are enriched by either the cluster or in-class differentiation model. The cluster model groups students with engaging differentiated classroom experiences that move beyond the grade level standards. The in-class model is individual differentiated lessons provided by the teacher. The school may work with the high school to allow a middle school student to take high school classes in order to further expand their knowledge beyond the assigned grade level. Tier 2 time occurs with individual differentiated lessons during 5th period to ensure students are enriched or remediated.

South Spencer High School Model

High ability high school students are offered Advanced Placement and Dual-Credit courses so they can earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously. Counselors, teachers, parents, and administrators will work together to determine appropriate placement and a 4 year plan of preparation for college and career. Academic and Spell Bowls are offered along with multiple CTE pathways. Students are eligible to enroll in a STEM challenge and Quiz Bowl during the instructional day. CTE pathways include: Construction, Agriculture, Education, Professions, Broadcasting, Medical, Criminal Justice, Fire Science, Fine Arts, Business, and Hospitality/Culinary Arts

Counseling and Guidance Plan

A comprehensive and differentiated guidance and counseling plan for High Ability students in grades K–12 is essential to meeting their unique academic, social, and emotional development needs. Gifted learners often think and learn rapidly, seek out challenges, and exhibit advanced cognitive maturity, yet their social and emotional development may not align. Characteristics such as perfectionism, anxiety, and social isolation are common, underscoring the need for tailored support beyond the scope of

traditional counseling programs.

High Ability students frequently require guidance with academic and future planning. In middle and high school, they may need extra support navigating advanced academic options. Counselors and social workers play a vital role in helping students and families navigate and make informed choices.

Social-emotional support is provided K–12 by school social workers and counselors through individual counseling sessions, daily check-ins, and targeted interventions. Sensory breaks are also available and are tailored to individual needs, often using visual schedules to prompt regulation and prevent emotional escalation.

Elementary and middle schools implement the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) framework to address academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs, ensuring that support is proactive and data-driven. This multi-tiered framework is designed to identify and support students who struggle academically or behaviorally using evidence-based interventions and progress monitoring. As a district, South Spencer School Corporation is intentional in teaching self-regulation strategies that empower students to function at their best. Together, our educators, community resources, and families work to ensure that High Ability students not only thrive academically but also grow into confident, well-rounded individuals.

South Spencer's differentiated HA counseling plan for learners is:

- Proactive and developmentally appropriate
- Collaborative, involving families, teachers, counselors, and administrators
- Flexible and continuously updated to reflect best practices
- Focused on providing a safe, supportive, and enriching environment that nurtures each student's potential

South Spencer Corporation High Ability Counseling Plan:

1. Parents of High Ability identified students will be notified and informed, when necessary of their child's social-emotional needs, identification scores, and current education path.
2. Each counselor and social worker will be informed of the High Ability students in order to meet their academic, social or emotional needs. Community outreach will be utilized, as needed.
3. At South Spencer High School, freshman students and parents will be given

guidance and counseling in class selections while working towards their chosen 4 year academic plan with continued guidance throughout the school years.

The Indiana Association for the Gifted provides resources for high ability coordinators, parents, and teachers of high ability students. Visit www.iag-online.org

Professional Development Plan

The South Spencer Strategic Plan is rooted in the belief that students, staff, and families deserve access to high-quality programs, services, teaching, and learning experiences within an environment defined by high expectations, continuous improvement, and innovation. As part of our 1.5 strategic initiative, we are committed to providing rich and diverse program offerings that empower all students to reach their full potential. We will equip and support all staff with research-based instructional and collaborative practices to effectively meet the unique needs of every learner. Progress will be continuously measured by the quality and expansion of K–12 program offerings and the enhancement of professional development opportunities. Besides building professional developments, select educators will be encouraged to attend the IAG annual conference, AP training, SIEC workshops and other high ability opportunities outside the corporation.

Program Evaluation

South Spencer School Corporation is committed to the ongoing evaluation and improvement of its High Ability program to support the cognitive, social, and emotional development of all identified students. Regular assessments will be conducted to identify program strengths, challenges, and areas for continuous improvement.

The High Ability Plan will be reviewed annually by the Broad-Based Planning Committee, a diverse group that includes educators, parents, community members and other key stakeholders. The South Spencer School Corporation maintains ultimate responsibility and authority for all student services. This committee will meet to review policies, evaluate services, and recommend enhancements aimed at improving student outcomes and supporting the evolving needs of High Ability learners.