

# Bremen Public Schools High Ability Program



## Handbook

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## Philosophy

Bremen Public Schools recognizes each child's academic individuality and his or her right to learn. Students with an exceptional ability to learn require differentiated instruction which challenges, accelerates and enriches their education. In order for these students to succeed and progress, their unique learning needs must be met. Bremen Public Schools are committed to meeting these needs of the high ability students. Services will be provided to high ability students of all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

## Definition of High Ability

A high ability student performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of academic accomplishment when compared to students of the same age, experience, or environment, and whose educational needs and/or individual academic growth cannot be met through typical grade level core curriculum and/or instruction. When compared to their peers, a high ability student's continued progress requires additional services as the regular curriculum provided is not sufficiently challenging for them.

## Continuum of Services

Bremen Public Schools offer a continuum of services for highly able students. Below is a brief overview of program services.

### Services for All Students

- Flexible grouping
- Leveled Guided Reading
- Differentiated Instruction

### Services for Many Students

- Advanced and Honors classes (grades 6-12)
- ACP classes (grades 9-12)
- Academic Competition Teams
- Extracurricular Activities

### Services for a Few Students

- Early Entrance
- Grade Advancement
- Advanced Placement
- Early Graduation

## Program Description

High ability students are identified using a multi-faceted student assessment plan which includes measures of achievement and ability, parent or teacher recommendations, and classroom performance. The Broad-Based Planning Committee (BBPC), consisting of administrators, teachers, counselors, students, and parents, oversees the planning of programming provided for the educational and emotional needs of the high ability learners.

K-5 students are placed in heterogenous classrooms with teachers providing grade level curriculum differentiated to meet their needs. High ability students receive planned extensions of grade level standards and/or curriculum compacting and acceleration according to their identification and academic success.

At the Middle School Level (grades 6-8), identified High Ability Language Arts students are in heterogenous classes with the teacher providing differentiated instruction to meet their needs. Identified High Ability Math students are placed in advanced Math classes which are differentiated according to their identification and academic success.

At the High School (grades 9-12), identified high ability students are encouraged to take Honors courses, AP, and ACP courses whenever possible according to their identification. A few high ability students take online courses to supplement course offerings at BHS.

Teachers are involved in professional development and collaborative planning with the high ability coordinator and other staff members as appropriate.

## Multi-faceted Assessment Plan

The benchmark grade levels for high ability identification are grades K, 2, 5, 8 and 10. All students in grades K, 2, and 5 participate in the CogAT ability testing. All students in grades K-8 take part in the NWEA testing. All freshmen take the PSAT 9.

### K-8 Testing Instruments

#### Achievement Tests:

- NWEA testing in grades K-8 (all students)
  - Math
  - Language Usage
  - Reading

#### Ability Tests:

- CogAT testing in Grades K, 2, and 5
- New enrollees are given the CogAT in the year they enroll

#### Additional Measures:

- KOI, grades K-1
- SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students)
- Grades, work samples

### High School Data

#### 9<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Grades in Advanced Courses in Middle School
- ECA's
- PSAT 9

#### 10<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Grades from Honors courses taken in 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- ECA's
- PSAT

#### 11<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Grades from Honors courses taken in 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- ECA's
- ACT/PSAT

#### 12<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- Grades from Honors/ACP/AP courses taken in 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- ACT/SAT
- ACP Requirements met (set by IUSB)
- AP requirements

### Identification Procedure

1. All ability and achievement data is compiled onto a grade level spreadsheet. SIGS scores and other pertinent data is added as applicable.
2. The High Ability Identification Committees analyze the information recorded. The K-8 committees meet each spring to review new data on already identified students and to consider data on students who are not identified but who are part of the high ability potential pool.
3. Parents of identified students in the benchmark grade levels are informed in the spring that students are eligible for high ability services through a letter in the final report card.
4. High Ability identification from eighth grade is carried over to the high school and used for freshmen and sophomores.
5. The High Ability High School committee meets at the end of the second trimester. New student data and current junior data is reviewed.
6. Information on new enrollees K-12 is reviewed within 30 days of enrollment.

### Petitioning Procedure

If anyone disagrees with a non-placement decision for a student, they may petition the High Ability Coordinator or Principal for reconsideration within 30 days of the beginning of school or student enrollment. A review of available data and completion of the SIGS will be required. Additional achievement or ability measures may be administered as needed.

### Exit Procedure

There are three situations in which high ability services may be discontinued for students.

1. Students moving from the district will no longer be receiving services. Copies of placement data and included in the cum file and will be forwarded to the student's new district.
2. Parents may deny services for their child. If previously part of the high ability programming, an exit interview will be conducted to assess reasons for requested removal. Counseling will be provided to encourage reconsideration if removal is not in the best interest of the student as determined by the committee. All reasonable attempts will be made to

address parent concerns, but removal will be granted when counseling is unsuccessful.

3. Students who are unsuccessful may be removed after interventions have been attempted and failed to resolve problems. The following interventions will be implemented as appropriate:
  - a. Behavior Issues
    1. Parent meeting – student and parents will meet with the teacher, counselor, and High Ability Coordinator to address concerns.
    2. Counseling services – the child will meet with the school guidance counselor and High Ability Coordinator to discuss behavior issues and develop a behavior plan.
    3. Behavior issues are not a reason for dismissal, but should be addressed as special needs. Only serious behaviors which disrupt and impede the learning of others will be considered reasons for removal, if behavior interventions are unsuccessful.
    4. Exit interview – an exit interview with the student and parents will be conducted to discuss removal and what must occur for the child to reenter the program.
  - b. Failure to meet minimum performance standards (passing grades or Pass+ on ISTEP, ECA's)
    1. Parent meeting – student and parent will meet with the teacher and high ability coordinator to discuss interventions utilized or needed.
    2. Counseling – services will be provided to determine if there are external issues affecting performance that must be addressed to help the student succeed.
    3. Removal – will occur only if interventions are unsuccessful and services are not beneficial for the student after the parent is contacted.
    4. Exit interview – will be conducted with the student and parents to discuss results of interventions and what must occur if re-admission to the program is to be considered.

## Curriculum and Instructional Strategies Plan

This plan is being developed.

## Counseling and Guidance Plan

The social and emotional needs of high ability students are supported through cluster grouping and placement in Advanced, Honors, and ACP or AP classes where students are able to interact with peers of similar academic levels. School Counselors are stakeholders in the High Ability BBPC committee. School Counselors provide counseling as needed.

A more complete plan is being developed.

## Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is an ongoing process at Bremen Public Schools. Once the High Ability Data Report is available from the DOE it is reviewed carefully. There are meetings in each building and the Broad-based Planning Committee meets to review the report. Identification, high ability services, and curriculum strengths and weaknesses are identified. Goals are established.

In the spring of 2017, the Broad-based Committee met and members completed a self-assessment checklist to guide our internal review of our high ability program. The goals established for the 2017-18 school year based on the compiled checklist data are:

1. Establish written goals and objectives for high ability services.
2. Establish a written differentiated affective curriculum to meet the social and emotional needs of high ability students.
3. Encourage teachers of high ability students to complete high ability licensure and/or take courses toward high ability licensure.

## **Professional Development Plan**

The High Ability Program for the Bremen Public Schools is embedded into the district philosophy which is that it is the responsibility of education to meet the needs of all students and help them to develop their talents and abilities. It is therefore imperative that curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development be intertwined and work together to improve the teaching/learning process.

The Bremen Elementary/Middle School and the Bremen Senior High School each have a School Improvement Plan as outlined by Public Law 22. It is the expectation that all teachers participate in the development and implementation of each school's plan and take part in the professional development activities that promote the increased student achievement all of the school's students, including those with exceptional abilities.

It is the intent of the High Ability Professional Development Program to supplement building level professional development opportunities with additional activities that will benefit high ability students and increase learning for all teachers and students. Professional Development goals for the High Ability Program are:

1. To encourage cadres of teachers to complete High Ability licensure or university coursework toward licensure,
2. To help all teachers to more fully understand the academic, social, and emotional needs of high ability learners.
3. To encourage teachers to participate in district study groups that focus on high ability education. Topics may include, but are not limited to standards, assessment, acceleration, enrichment, appropriate instruction and materials, and learning environments. Meetings throughout the school year will help promote optimum student achievement and talent development by assuring that curriculum, instruction, and assessment are on target for our high ability learners.
4. To provide in-services that ensure all teachers have knowledge of the characteristics, social and emotional needs, and strategies that will enable high ability learners to be challenged with appropriate curricular experiences, and become independent learners and expert communicators. Strategies to achieve these goals may include, among others, diagnostic/prescriptive teaching; infusion of higher level, creative, and

critical thinking skills into the curriculum; curriculum compacting; differentiating curriculum; problem-based learning; acceleration; enrichment; research skills; and advanced technology skills.

5. To ensure that all middle school and interested high school language arts teachers are provided opportunities for Great Books training which ensures that the program materials and the inquiry method is used effectively.
6. To promote conference opportunities for staff to build skills in meeting the needs of High Ability learners, learn from other practitioners, and network with other professionals.
7. To encourage high ability teacher leaders to join organizations and groups that enhance the practice of teaching high ability learners and to disseminate this knowledge to their teaching colleagues.
8. To facilitate grant writing prospects to promote teacher and student learning opportunities.

The High Ability Coordinator, with the support of building and central office administrators, will:

1. Inform teachers of high ability scholarship opportunities to help with the cost of university coursework toward high ability licensure.
2. Provide yearly in-service opportunities for teachers and parents about characteristics and the needs of high ability students and strategies for teaching high ability students.
3. Meet with staff individually, in teams/departments, and in whole building formats to discuss the needed of high ability students and high ability curriculum and programming.
4. Develop and support study groups and work teams to promote high ability curriculum and programming.
5. Use high ability grant monies to promote attendance at the IAG and /or NAGC, Great Books training, other high ability specific workshops, and to purchase needed materials specifically designed to support to the instruction of high ability students.