

Mill Creek Community School Corporation

# High Ability Program Handbook

Cascade High School, Cascade Middle School, Mill Creek East Elementary, Mill Creek West Elementary

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***Critical Thinking***  
***Confidence***



***Communication***  
***Collaboration***



***Creative Thinking***  
***Commitment***

## ***Mission***

Mill Creek Community School Corporation is dedicated to providing all students with an appropriate education to meet each student's academic, social, and emotional needs. Students with high abilities perform at, or show the potential to perform at, an outstanding level of accomplishment when compared to students who are the same age, experience, or within the same environment. Students from a variety of cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds are represented in this group. MCCSC recognizes that high ability students often require a customized curriculum that meets their unique needs of accelerated pace and/or challenge. MCCSC will provide these students with challenging integrated instruction and learning experiences that require evaluation, creativity, and analysis within the regular classroom and the community. MCCSC and the community will be responsible for ensuring that high ability students are correctly identified with fidelity and supported by educational services within the schools and community. By meeting the needs of these students, we believe that high ability students have the potential to lead our society to continually formulate questions, evaluate information, and create ideas.

# Belief Statements

1. High ability students require experiences beyond grade level standards and curriculum which engages them in meaningful and rigorous work, culminating in rich learning experiences.
2. High ability research-based instruction is a fundamental responsibility of the school corporation and should not be considered an “extra” or “privilege.”
3. Classrooms with high ability students contain diverse learners requiring curriculum to be adapted, differentiated, or replaced in order to meet high ability learners’ needs.
4. To provide for high ability students, flexible pacing and groupings must be used to allow for acceleration as appropriate.
5. Personnel directing the educational services for high ability students ( high ability coordinator) must be properly trained.
6. The general education program must integrate high ability programming.
7. Appropriately designed resources and programming are necessary to properly support the high ability program.
8. A continuum of programming for high ability students must exist for these students to properly matriculate through our educational system.
9. In order to meet the needs of high ability students, policies for early entrance, grade skipping, ability grouping, and dual enrollment must be created and followed.
10. A counseling/support system must be in place to support high ability students addressing their unique background needs, including racial, ethnic, socio-economic status, gender, and career needs.
11. A professional development program will be used that comprehensively prepares educators to work with high ability students.
12. A student identification process/system will be used that is research-based, formalized, comprehensive and non-discriminatory against any background characteristic of a student, such as race, gender, socio-economic status, behavior, twice exceptionalities, etc.

# Definition of High Ability

The definition of a High Ability student in Mill Creek Community School Corporation is in direct alignment with the state of Indiana.

***‘High Ability Student 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.***

Indiana Code 20-36-1-3

The domains that Mill Creek recognizes and services are Mathematics, Language Arts, and General Intellectual (a student who qualifies in both Mathematics and Language Arts).

# Identification Process

All students in grades K, 2, 3, 5, and 7 will take the full battery CogAT. To fairly represent English language learning (ELL) students, the ELL option will be utilized to best represent the OTL (Opportunity to Learn). Partial composite scores (QN) will be used to best represent ELL students. Because MCCSC is a small school corporation, national norms will be used when determining percentile ranking.

**Language Arts:** Those students scoring in the 96th percentile (national norms) or above on the verbal component qualify for language arts high ability services.

- Students who scored in the 80th percentile-95th percentile will then be given an achievement test such as Iowa Assessments.
- Students who score in the 96th percentile or above on the language arts portion of Iowa Assessments, a nationally norm-referenced achievement test, will also qualify for high ability services.
- Qualitative data such as: Scales for Identifying Gifted Students, student language arts work samples, student portfolios, teacher observations of students in language arts, may also be considered.
- Scale for Identifying Gifted Students with scores in the language arts area of 130 or above will qualify for high ability services.

**Math:** Students scoring in the 96th percentile or above on the quantitative reasoning test or a QN composite (quantitative and nonverbal) score in the 96th percentile or above qualify for math high ability services.

- Students who score in the 80th-95th percentile will then be given an achievement test such as Iowa Assessments.
- Students who score in the 96th percentile or above on the math portion of Iowa Assessments, a nationally norm-referenced achievement test, will also qualify for high ability services.
- Qualitative data such as: Scales for Identifying Gifted Students, student mathematics work samples, student portfolios, teacher observations of students in mathematics, may also be considered.
- Scale for Identifying Gifted Students with scores in the mathematics area of 130 or above will qualify for high ability services.
- The Orleans Hanna Algebra Assessment test will be given to all students in 5th and 6th grade to determine readiness and early entry into advanced math, pre-Algebra, and Algebra courses.

# Program Goals

Mill Creek Community School Corporation will provide services specifically designed for the high ability learner. Our goals and objectives:

## Identification

1. With fidelity, identify high ability students utilizing nationally normed potential assessments, achievement assessments, and qualitative data.
2. Offer early screening to 4 year old students in an effort to qualify for early entrance into the kindergarten program.
3. Identification process is aligned with state recommendations

## Services

1. Evaluate the needs of students within the school corporation K-12 in order to determine where enrichment and acceleration are already implemented and where enrichment and acceleration are needed.
2. Allow acceleration in Math at the middle school by utilizing the Orleans Hanna Algebra Readiness test coupled with student motivation and desire.
3. Development of a “watch list” for students who do not qualify but are very close in order to include increased pace curriculum, enrichment pullout, and independent study opportunities.
4. Provide advanced courses which increase rigor with a focus on depth and complexity.

## Curriculum and Instruction

1. Provide appropriate professional development for administrators and teachers in high ability teaching strategies and differentiation in the classroom.
2. Implement research-based high ability curriculum K-12.
3. Ensure that the gifted classroom is an extension of the general education classroom with alignment of state standards.

### **Guidance and Counseling**

1. Provide social and emotional education of high ability learners to staff members.
2. Provide research based curriculum of social and emotional education to high ability learners.
3. Provide appropriate counseling support for high ability learners K-12.

### **Program Effectiveness**

1. Conduct data interpretation, especially pretest and post test data to determine growth within the high ability program
2. A licensed high ability teacher/coordinator will assist administrators in evaluating high ability services K-12 and that services support local, state, and national guidelines.
3. Evaluate high ability program effectiveness each year by analyzing data in order to prove student growth, identification fidelity, appropriate services, and high ability curriculum usage.



# Appeals Process

A family may request an appeal of the appropriate academic placement of a student. Appeals may be considered the last 3 weeks of the school calendar and will conclude on the last day of the school year. If it is decided that additional testing is needed, Mill Creek Community School Corporation will provide alternative test measures in order to collect appropriate data to determine placement. Once all data is collected, (quantitative and qualitative achievement data, student portfolio), the high ability identification committee will again review the student's profile to determine appropriate placement.

## Exit Procedures

High ability services may not be a good fit for every student who is identified as high ability. Many factors may contribute to this such as social concerns, anxiety, pace of instruction, illnesses, etc. For this reason, exiting the program may be initiated by the school or parent at any time.

Before a student is removed, a committee consisting of the parent, teacher, student, and school administrator or counselor will meet to create a Student Intervention Plan. The Student Intervention Plan will put in place accommodations to assist the student in becoming more successful in high ability placement.

A timeline of no less than one grading period will be set for completion. During this time, steps of improvement will be documented, the committee will reconvene to determine student growth and success. If improvements have been made, the student may continue with high ability placement. If the interventions were not successful, the student may exit the program.

During the conference, parents/legal guardians may also remove a student from the high ability program without placing a Student Intervention Plan into action. Parents may request immediate dismissal from the high ability program.

Any high ability student who is removed from the program or is no longer receiving services, the high ability coordinator will remove the “high ability” flag” from the student test number (STN).

# Programming Services

**Elementary:** Mill Creek Community School Corporation maintains a high ability program at both elementary schools which services students in kindergarten through 5th grade. High ability students are grouped according to academic strengths and designations in Language Arts and Math. For this reason, differentiation in the elementary grades is essential. Differentiation allows all students to learn more based on readiness and motivation. Furthermore, grouping students allows our elementary schools' program to fit students' capabilities in order to deeply develop critical and creative thinking skills, reducing boredom, frustration, and under-achievement. At times, students and parents can expect an accelerated curriculum which research shows to be the most effective intervention for gifted students. Students can also expect depth and complexity to deepen understanding of grade level standards.

Other opportunities include:

- Exposure to research-based high ability curriculum
- Cluster grouping
- Pull-out classes in which students are taken out of their regular classroom on a daily basis with other high ability students for replacement curriculum and instruction during specific subjects
- Opportunities to participate in Spell Bowl, Math Bowl, and Science Bowl

**Middle School:** Where appropriate, Cascade Middle School offers cluster grouping for high ability learners. This allows teachers to compact the curriculum and embed enrichment activities that focus on advanced in-depth content (which may be accelerated), creative development, problem solving, research-based projects, and higher order thinking skills. Students will have the opportunity to begin obtaining high school credits through offered courses in Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, Sciences, and Foreign Language Studies.

Other opportunities include:

- Exposure to research-based high ability curriculum
- Cluster grouping
- Advanced courses in Math and Language Arts
- Academic competitions

**High School:** Coursework at the high school level includes honors classes, advanced placements, and dual credit courses. AP courses are instructed using program guidelines which may lead to college credit. Honors versions of classes are available which involve a more in-depth approach to discussions of topics, extensive writing, and research on content specific topics.

- Academic competitions and opportunities:

Spell Bowl, Mock Trial, Kinetic Kafe, ISSMA Music Competition

*Note: There are other opportunities that are individualized to meet the gifts and needs of students.*

- Academic Honors Courses:

Biology, Chemistry, English 9, English 10, World History, Geometry, Algebra II, Physics

- AP Classes

Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Economics, Government, US History, Language and Composition, Literature and Composition

- Dual Credit Courses:

Communication 101(Speech), POLS 101 (Government), English 111, English 112, Math 136 (College Algebra), Math 137 (Trigonometry with Precalc), Economics 101, Psychology 101

## Characteristics of a Gifted Child

Although there are many definitions of giftedness, according to the National Association of Gifted Children, gifted children do have many common characteristics. It is important to note; however, that there is a distinction between a child who is bright and does well in school versus a truly gifted child. This chart helps us to distinguish some of those characteristics.

| A Bright Child                                   | A Gifted Child                  |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Knows the answers                                | Asks the questions              |
| Is interested                                    | Is highly curious               |
| Has good ideas                                   | Has wild, silly ideas           |
| Works hard                                       | Plays around, yet tests well    |
| Answers the questions                            | Discusses in detail; elaborates |
| Top group  | Beyond the group                |
| Listens with interest                            | Shows strong feelings, opinions |
| Learns with ease                                 | Already knows                   |
| 6-8 repetitions for mastery                      | 1-2 repetitions for mastery     |
| Understands ideas                                | Constructs abstractions         |
| Enjoys peers                                     | Prefers adults                  |
| Grasps the meaning                               | Draws inferences                |
| Completes the assignments                        | Initiates projects              |
| Is receptive                                     | Is intense                      |
| Copies accurately                                | Creates new designs             |
| Enjoys school                                    | Enjoys learning                 |
| Absorbs information                              | Manipulates information         |
| Technician                                       | Inventor                        |
| Is alert   | Is keenly observant             |
| Good memorizer                                   | Good guesser                    |
| Is pleased with learning                         | Is highly self-critical         |
| Enjoys straight-forward, sequential presentation | Thrives on complexity           |

