



HIGH ABILITY HANDBOOK

Union County College Corner Joint School District

Mission Statement

Union County College Corner Joint School District recognizes that some students perform at, or show the potential to perform at, an outstanding level of accomplishment in the core academic areas of language arts and mathematics. These students are found in all racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groupings of students, and we recognize the need to identify such students through a systematic approach. The high-ability program provides the rigor, responsiveness, and support that will enrich learning so that students will maximize their potential and develop socially and emotionally to be contributing members of society.

UCCCJSD High Ability Goals

1. Implement an unbiased identification process using multi-faceted quantitative and qualitative measures.
2. Create a variety of program options designed to help HA students achieve maximum growth.
3. Provide professional development for educators to allow them to meet the unique needs of the HA learner.
4. Evaluate, reflect, and revise the HA program annually to provide the most effective programming for the UCCCJSD HA student.

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District Definition of a High-Ability Student

The UCCCSJD follows the Indiana Code in defining a student with high ability as one who:

1. 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:
2. Is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests (IC 20-36-1-3).

Multifaceted Identification Plan Components

Union County College Corner Joint School District High Ability Identification Plan

Kindergarten

- All students are administered the full CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test).
- Any student in the 8th or 9th stanine of the CogAT is automatically identified as high-ability.
- Any student in the 7th stanine of the CogAT is placed in the selection pool. A second nationally normed assessment, data and/or the classroom teacher's completion of the SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students), is used for these students.
- Kindergarten teachers and high-ability coordinators and/or administration meet to make the final identification based on all measures.

Second grade

- All students are administered the full CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test).
- Any student in the 8th or 9th stanine of the CogAT is automatically identified as high-ability.
- Any student in the 7th stanine of the CogAT is placed in the selection pool. A second nationally normed assessment, data and/or the classroom teacher's completion of the SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students), is used for these students.
- Second-grade teachers and high-ability coordinators and/or administration meet to make the final identification based on all measures.

Fifth grade

- All students are administered the full CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test).
- Any student in the 8th or 9th stanine of the CogAT is automatically identified as high-ability.
- Any student in the 7th stanine of the CogAT is placed in the selection pool. A second nationally normed assessment, data and/or the classroom teacher's completion of the SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students), is used for these students.
- Fifth-grade teachers and high-ability coordinators and/or administration meet to make the final identification based on all measures.

Middle School

- Students who have been identified will keep their HA designation and may receive advanced programming in middle school.
- Student normed data is tracked (Ilearn) across trends. If a student has a trend of 95% of above with the state % ranking, a meeting will be held with the administrator and teacher of the particular subject to look at data and decide if a high ability label should be granted.

High School

- Students who have been identified will keep their HA designation and may receive advanced programming in high school.
 - HA students will be enrolled in the *Enrollment Honors Seal Diploma* program or the *Enrollment Honors Plus Diploma* program.
- Additional students who did not previously qualify for HA services can choose the enrollment pathway for the Enrollment Honors Seal.

A student's demonstrated performance and a teacher's informed perspective on their ability to handle advanced coursework are strong indicators for appropriate program placement or withdrawal decisions.

Appeals Procedure: (Appendix A)

The UCCJSD High Ability Identification Team employs a well-designed process, consistent with Indiana Code and Rules, that uses sound measures designed for high-ability learners to identify students whose academic needs significantly exceed those of typical students of the same age, experience, and environment. Students are identified as High Ability (HA) in Mathematics, Language Arts, or both, through multiple pathways for each area. For students not identified, an appeals process allows a teacher, parent, or guardian to challenge the decision. This challenge requires submitting an official written appeal using Appendix A to the relevant building principal. A team composed of the building principal, corporation HA Coordinators, and the student's teacher for the class/course will review all appeal materials and any new testing data, meet with the petitioner, and ultimately make the final decision regarding the student's identification. The decision following the appeal is final.

Exit Procedure: (Appendix B & C)

When a student's performance falls below the expectations of the high-ability program and contemplation for withdrawal from the program is expressed by a teacher or appropriate personnel, the parent, guardian, and/or student will be notified in writing (letter or email) of a probationary period in addition to a phone call. This communication will specify:

- A timeframe for improvement
- The specific areas where the student needs to improve to stay in the program
- The measures that will determine if the needed improvement has occurred

At the end of this timeframe, the school (building principal) will inform the parent of one of the following outcomes:

- The student has been removed from the program.
- The student will remain in the program but will continue on a contract.
- The student will remain in the program without a continuing contract.

During this probationary period, a conference can be requested by any involved party. If requested, this conference will include the teacher, building administrator, parent, and student.

Please note that when students are re-administered the CogAT test in grades 2 and 5, it may be determined through those scores, in addition to trends with NWEA scores and/or a SIGS form, that a student's most appropriate academic support is not within the high-ability curriculum or services.

If a parent no longer desires their child to be identified as high-ability or to receive high-ability services, they may submit a written request to the High Ability Coordinator at 107 Layman Street, Liberty, IN 47353. The HA Coordinator will review this request in conjunction with the building principal. If a student is 18 years old, they may personally sign permission to remove the high-ability designation and services. The parent will be notified of the review decision.

Curriculum and Instruction Plan

Service models for the delivery of curriculum and instruction may vary from year to year based on the needs of the individual students and the number of identified students. The services listed below are research-based and supported by the district, but may vary from building to building depending on student need, enrollment, number of classrooms, and number of identified students at each grade level. Student needs may be met in one or more of the following placements:

Grades K-5 (Elementary)

- Ability Grouping: Students are grouped by ability and readiness level in math and language arts. Groups can be formed and reformed to meet varied instructional purposes.
- Between-Class Grouping: The practice of “trading students” among teachers at a particular grade level, so that each teacher has a narrower range of abilities for the chosen subject or topic. The groups will further differentiate in order to meet the needs of the students.
- Flexible Instruction Groups: during a particular subject, e.g. math or reading, all teachers of the same grade divide all the students into instructional groups according to skill level and provide differentiated instruction for each leveled group.
- Subject skipping: on occasion, some students go to a different grade level for instruction or may use materials from higher placements in one or more subjects.
- Early Entrance into Kindergarten.

Grades 6-8 (Middle School)

- In addition to those above, UCMS offers:
- High Ability Language and Math Classes. The HA class is differentiated to provide students of high ability with learning experiences at a level, speed, and depth that meets their needs.
- Based upon ILEARN results and high ability labels, students may be auto-rostered to take Pre-Algebra during their 7th-grade year, followed by Algebra during their 8th-grade year.

Grades 9-12 (High School)

- UCHS courses for our High Ability students prepare them for their Enrollment Honors and Enrollment Honors Plus pathways. High-ability students may also have the opportunity for early graduation by earning a graduation seal.

Counseling and Guidance Plan

Students labeled as High Ability may require support to foster positive social and emotional development and the development of self-regulatory skills (organization, time management, self-discipline, motivation, etc.). Children with high abilities may have affective needs resulting from their increased capacity to think beyond their years, greater intensity in response, combinations of unique interests, personality characteristics, and conflicts that are different from those of their age mates. The social workers at the upper levels and teachers at the primary levels are available to meet with students and parents to discuss the specific needs of their high-ability children. In particular, these social and emotional issues will be covered: overexcitability, asynchronous development, perfectionism, self-esteem/identity issues, introversion, peer pressure, bullying, competitiveness, social skills, stress, acceptance, family dynamics, study habits, and leadership skills. Social workers will provide individual support for identified high-ability students if deemed appropriate by the appropriate staff and/or parent/guardian requests.

Professional Development Plan

High Ability Licensure:

The Union County College Corner Joint School District will pursue the finest and most qualified candidates for positions in our schools. We continue to financially support teachers who seek to obtain their High Ability licensure through additional coursework.

UCCCJSD is committed to the professional development of all those involved in HA Programming, including, but not limited to:

| Group | Type/Topics/Training | Timeline |
|--|--|---|
| High Ability Coordinator | <p>*Assistance from experts to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Align the philosophy, goals, and commitment for the development of students with HA with district goals for the development of all students 2. Create flexible policies regarding student placement to meet the needs of individual students 3. Use student outcomes to demonstrate program effectiveness 4. Involve stakeholders in the planning of services, communicating, and evaluating the program | On-going, evaluated in accordance with the district Program Evaluation Plan. |
| Principals | Training by experts who can provide guidance on identification, grouping options, and differentiation specific to high ability. | On-going |
| Teachers of Students with High Ability | <p>*Training on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Characteristics and possible behavioral manifestations of students with high ability 2. Issues and needed support 3. Indiana Code 4. Recognizing traditionally underserved populations 5. Basics of gifted education, including curriculum and instruction 6. Use of student performance data to inform curriculum and instruction, and to inform content for professional development <p>Encouragement to earn HA licensure Encouragement to attend the Indiana Association for the Gifted (IAG) Annual Conference</p> | On-going |
| Social Workers | *Specific training related to students with high ability and their social and emotional needs | On-going |
| Parents | <p>*Support provided for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Characteristics and concerns of gifted students after identification notices go out 2. Enrichment activities in our local region | Individual meetings with HS counselors during scheduling. AP Counseling sessions are available. Parent meetings are available upon request. |
| General Ed Teachers | Overview of the program and services | On-going |

The Building Principal, High Ability (HA) Coordinator, and teachers will review the UCCCJSD High Ability Plan annually. Each student's progress will be evaluated using the following measures:

Elementary:

Student success will be measured by norm-referenced grade-level achievement testing that indicates growth. Each student's individual growth should be evident, regardless of their proficiency level at the beginning of the academic year.

Middle School:

Program effectiveness will be measured by norm-referenced achievement testing that indicates growth.

High School:

Program effectiveness will be measured by successful enrollment in advanced courses, including AP classes. Additionally, student success will be measured by performance on the PSAT.

Furthermore, the district's high-ability plan will also undergo an annual review by the Broad-Based Planning Committee.

Appendix

*Union County College Corner Joint School District
High Ability Manual Forms/Procedures*

- A: Appeal Paperwork
- B: Withdrawal Process
- C: Improvement Plan
- D: Letter of Acceptance into HA
- E. Reassessment Letter
- F: Letter of Removal from HA



Appeal Process for Placement in a High-Ability Class or Program Union County College Corner Joint School District

1. Complete the information below and return it to the building principal.
2. The appeal will be considered by a committee consisting of the following individuals:
 - a. Building Principal
 - b. Corporation High Ability Coordinator
 - c. Teacher of the Class or Program
3. The requesting individual will have the opportunity to discuss their appeal with the committee before any decision is made.

.....

Student Name: _____

Name of Program: _____

School: *Circle One:* CCUS LES UCMS UCHS Grade: _____

Date: _____

Name of Individual Making the Appeal: _____

Relationship to the Student: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please give a description of the reasons you feel this student should be included in this program. (You may attach additional information/evidence.)



Withdrawal Process From A High-Ability Class or Program Union County College Corner Joint School District

When a student's performance falls below the expectations of the high-ability program and contemplation for withdrawal from the program is expressed by a teacher or appropriate personnel, the parent, guardian, and/or student will be notified in writing (letter or email) of a probationary period in addition to a phone call. This communication will specify:

- A timeframe for improvement
- The specific areas where the student needs to improve to stay in the program
- The measures that will determine if the needed improvement has occurred

At the end of this timeframe, the school (building principal) will inform the parent of one of the following outcomes:

- The student has been removed from the program.
- The student will remain in the program but will continue on a contract.
- The student will remain in the program without a continuing contract.

During this probationary period, a conference can be requested by any involved party. If requested, this conference will include the teacher, building administrator, parent, and student.

Please note that when students are re-administered the CogAT test in grades 2 and 5, it may be determined through those scores, in addition to trends with NWEA scores and/or a SIGS form, that a student's most appropriate academic support is not within the high-ability curriculum or services.

If a parent no longer desires their child to be identified as high-ability or to receive high-ability services, they may submit a written request to the High Ability Coordinator at 107 Layman Street, Liberty, IN 47353. The HA Coordinator will review this request in conjunction with the building principal. If a student is 18 years old, they may personally sign permission to remove the high-ability designation and services. The parent will be notified of the review decision.



Student Improvement Plan For A High-Ability Class or Program Union County College Corner Joint School District

Name of Student: _____

Name of Program: _____

Date of Conference with Parent and Student: _____

Time Frame for Improvement:

The following areas must show improvement for the student to remain in the program:

Improvement will be measured in the following manner:

Comments:

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date

Principal Signature

Date

****Note: should be on school letterhead**

Date,

Dear Parents/Guardians of **Student Name,**

We have appreciated the opportunity to work with your child. Recently, we collected information regarding their reasoning and achievement. The results of these assessments indicate that the student would benefit from a more advanced curriculum and instruction in the **Academic Area Qualified** than is typically provided in the general education setting. Therefore, we are recommending that your student receive this advanced curriculum and instruction.

Please be aware that achievement and cognitive growth in children are variable. We will conduct reassessments at future points to ensure your student's academic placement remains the most appropriate for their learning needs. Consequently, the student's academic placement may be adjusted based on changes in their learning needs throughout their educational journey.

We look forward to our continued collaboration with the student and your family. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Coordinator Signature

****Note: should be on school letterhead**

Date,

Dear Parents/Guardians of **Student Name,**

We enjoyed the opportunity to work with the student during the past school year. In February, we collected information regarding reasoning and achievement. The information from these reassessments has led us to conclude that your student would be best served in the general education classroom in the areas of **academic area**. Therefore, we are recommending this general curriculum and instruction beginning in the next grade level. Your child will still receive high-ability instruction in **academic area**.

Please know that achievement and cognitive growth in students are variable, so we will reassess again in another following grade level to determine if your student's academic placement continues to be the most appropriate for learning needs. As such, academic placement may be modified as a result of changes in learning needs throughout subsequent school years.

We look forward to our continued work with the student and your family. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

High Ability Coordinator Signature

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians of **Student Name**,

We enjoyed the opportunity to work with the student during the past school year. In February, we collected information regarding reasoning and achievement. The information from these reassessments has led us to conclude that your student would be best served in the general education classroom in the areas of **academic areas**. Therefore, we are recommending this general curriculum and instruction beginning in the next grade level.

Please know that achievement and cognitive growth in students are variable, so we will reassess again in another following grade level to determine if your student's academic placement continues to be the most appropriate for learning needs. As such, academic placement may be modified as a result of changes in learning needs throughout subsequent school years.

We look forward to our continued work with the student and your family. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

High Ability Coordinator Signature

UCCCJSD High Ability Math Strands

Updated in 2025

For high-achieving math students to be properly challenged and ready for advanced classes, it's crucial to have a clear and consistent progression of mathematical concepts. When educators set clear expectations for each grade level, they create a unified learning path that builds on what students already know and speeds up their growth.

A well-designed curriculum that gradually introduces new, advanced topics helps students deepen their understanding of math and improve their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. However, different terminology and slight variations in strand names across grade levels can disrupt this progress. Establishing a standardized framework will make things clearer and ensure a smooth transition between grades.

- **Red rows** show when a strand is first introduced, meaning both the current and the next grade level's standards for that strand need to be taught.
- **Blue rows** indicate a strand was introduced in an earlier grade, so only the higher grade level standards need to be covered.

Overview

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| K | Number Sense | K and 1 |
| | Computation and Algebraic Thinking | K |
| | Geometry | K |
| | Measurement | K |
| | Data Analysis | K |

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Number Sense | 2 |
| | Computation and Algebraic Thinking | 1 |
| | Geometry | 1 |
| | Measurement | 1 |
| | Data Analysis | 1 and 2 |

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|--------------|-----------------|
| 2 | Number Sense | 3 |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---------|
| | Computation and Algebraic Thinking | 2 and 3 |
| | Geometry | 2 |
| | Measurement | 2 |
| | Data Analysis | 3 |

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 3 | Number Sense | 4 |
| | Computation & Algebraic Thinking | 4 |
| | Geometry | 3 and 4 |
| | Measurement | 3 |
| | Data Analysis | 4 |

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 4 | Number Sense | 5 |
| | Computation & Algebraic Thinking | 5 |
| | Geometry | 5 |
| | Measurement | 4 and 5 |
| | Data Analysis | 5 |

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 5 | Number Sense | 6 |
| | Ratios and Proportional Reasoning | 6 |
| | Algebra and Functions | 6 |
| | Geometry and Measurement | 6 |
| | Data Analysis and Statistics | 6 |

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|--|-----------------|
| 6 | Number Sense | 7 |
| | Ratios and Proportional Reasoning | 7 |
| | Algebra and Functions | 7 |
| | Geometry and Measurement | 7 |
| | Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability | 7 |

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|--|-----------------|
| 7 | Number Sense | 8 |
| | Ratios and Proportional Reasoning | 8 |
| | Algebra and Functions | 8 |
| | Geometry and Measurement | 8 |
| | Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability | 8 |

| Grade | Strand Name | Level of Strand |
|-------|---|-----------------|
| 8 | Number Systems, Expressions, and Functions | Algebra I |
| | Linear Equations, Inequalities, and Functions | Algebra I |
| | Systems of Linear Equations and Inequalities | Algebra I |
| | Quadratic & Exponential Equations & Functions | Algebra I |
| | Data Analysis and Statistics | Algebra I |
| | Data Analysis, Statistics, & Probability | Algebra I |