



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, ethnical, 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 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, 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 UCCJSD follows 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 9th stanine of the CogAT is automatically identified as high ability.
- Any student in the 7th or 8th stanine of the CogAT is placed in the selection pool. Classroom teachers complete the SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students) for these students.
- Kindergarten teachers and high ability coordinators meet to make final identification based on all of the measures.

Second grade

- All students are administered the full CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test).
- NWEA Math and Reading scores are compiled.
- Any student in the 9th stanine of the CogAT, NWEA Reading, or NWEA Math are automatically identified as high ability in the corresponding academic area.
- Students in the 7th or 8th stanine on these tests are placed in the selection pool. Classroom teachers complete the SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students) for these students.
- Second grade teachers and high ability coordinators meet to make final identification based on all of the measures.

Fifth grade

- All students are administered the full CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test).
- NWEA Math and Reading scores are compiled.
- Any student in the 9th stanine of the CogAT, NWEA Reading, or NWEA Math are automatically identified as high ability in the corresponding academic area..
- Students in the 7th or 8th stanine on these tests are placed in the selection pool. Classroom teachers complete the SIGS (Scales for Identifying Gifted Students) for these students.
- Fifth grade teachers and high ability coordinators meet to make final identification based on all of the measures.

Sixth grade

- All students are administered the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test to determine who should be placed in pre-Algebra in 7th grade.
- NWEA Math scores are compiled.

- Any student in the 9th stanine of the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test or NWEA Math will be automatically placed in pre-Algebra for 7th grade.
- Students in the 7th or 8th stanine on these tests are placed in the selection pool. Sixth & seventh grade math teachers and the high ability coordinators meet to make final placement in pre-Algebra based on all of the measures.

High School

1. Students who have been identified in middle school will keep their HA designation and receive advanced programming in the high school.
2. Additional students who did not previously qualify for HA services, who wish to self-select HA courses, should be considered on a case-by-case basis. These students and their parents will sign a waiver acknowledging that the placement was self-selected and not recommended and that the rigor of the course will not be modified.
3. PSAT scores will be used in conjunction with the AP Potential tool to identify students likely to score a 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams.

Actual observation of performance and insight from the teacher into the potential student success with the high ability curriculum may be the best indicator for placement or withdrawal from the program.

Appeals Procedure: (Appendix A)

The HA Identification Team for UCCCJSD uses a well-designed process, complete with Indiana Code and Rules, based upon sound measures designed for use with high ability learners in order to find those students whose academic needs are far beyond those of typical students of the same age, experience, and environment. Students are identified as HA in Mathematics, Language Arts, or both, with multiple pathways designed for each. An appeals process is in place for the student who is not identified, and a teacher, parent, or other person close to the child may challenge this decision. An official written appeal using Appendix A must be submitted to the appropriate building principal. A team consisting of the building principal, corporation HA Coordinators, and teacher of the class/course will review any appeal materials, new testing data, meet with the petitioner, and ultimately make the final decision on identification of the student. The decision after the appeal is final.

Exit Procedure: (Appendix B & C)

If a student is performing below the expectations for a high ability program and the teacher is considering withdrawal from the program, a conference must be held. The teacher, building administrator, parent, and student would participate in the conference. At the conference an Improvement Contract may be developed. At a minimum the contract would contain:

1. Time frame for improvement
2. Specific areas the student needs to improve to remain in the program
3. Measures to determine the needed improvement has been made

At the conclusion of the time period, the school (building principal) will notify the parent of one of the following:

1. Student has been removed from the program.
2. Student remains in the program, but continues on a contract.
3. Student remains in the program without a continuing contract.

Should a parent no longer wish his/her child to be designated as high ability or receive high ability services, he or she may request this in writing to the High Ability Coordinator, 107 Layman Street, Liberty, IN 47353. The HA Coordinator will review the request along with the building principal. If a student is 18 years of age, he or she may sign permission to remove the flag for high ability placement and services himself/herself. 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 the learning experiences at a level, speed, and depth that meets their needs.
- Students taking the Iowa Algebra Aptitude test may qualify to take Pre-Algebra during their 7th grade year.

Grades 9-12 (High School)

- UCHS course options challenge our High Ability students and prepare them for their continued advanced studies at a post-secondary institution. High Ability students may also have the opportunity for early graduation.
- Honors Courses: These courses cover material at a faster rate and incorporate more challenging content. The pace and rigor are designed to prepare students for the demands of AP coursework.
- Honors Advanced Placement Courses: College Board Approved curriculum/courses are of advanced or accelerated content comparable to introductory college level courses. An AP course includes the requirement to take the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Exam. Performance on those exams is on a scale of 1-5. Colleges may give credit or advanced placement to students who have achieved certain AP exam scores. Student grades are weighted by one point in AP courses. Currently we offer: AP Language, AP Literature, AP Stats, AP Calculus, AP Physics, AP Chemistry, AP Spanish, AP US History, AP US Government.
- Dual Credit Courses: elective courses available to enable students to concurrently earn high school and college credit (dependent upon staff availability).
- Technical Honors Courses: advanced technical courses offered through our cooperation with WCC.
- Early Graduation is an option at UCHS.

Counseling and Guidance Plan

Students labeled as High Ability may require support with fostering 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 counselors 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: overexcitabilities, asynchronous development, perfectionism, self-esteem/identity issues, introversion, peer pressure, bullying, competitiveness, social skills, stress, acceptance, family dynamics, study habits and leadership skills. In the Advanced Placement classrooms, counselors present information to students to help them cope with the stresses of the high ability world. Counselors at the high school meet individually each year to chart the high ability student’s post-secondary path.

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 need 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 behavior manifestation of students with high ability 2. Issues and needed supports 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

Counselors	*Specific training related to students with high ability and their social and emotional needs	On-going
Parents	*Support provided for: <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 available
General Ed Teachers	Overview of the program and services	On-going

Program Evaluation Plan

The UCCCJSD High Ability Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Building Principal, HA Coordinator, and teacher. Each student will be evaluated using the following measures:

Elementary:

Student success will be measured by grade level achievement testing that notes growth and are norm referenced. Each child's individual growth should be demonstrated even if that child began the year proficient on grade level standards.

Middle School:

Program effectiveness will be measured by achievement testing that notes growth and are norm referenced.

High School:

Program effectiveness will be measured by success in honors courses, including AP classes. Additionally student success will be measured on the PSAT.

Additionally, the district high ability plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Broad-Based Planning Committee. The Indiana State Board of Education requires the establishment of a Broad-Based Planning Committee (BBPC) that meets at least annually to review the local education plan for high ability learners. The committee must have participation from diverse groups representing the school and community.

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

1. If a student is performing below the expectations for a high ability program and the teacher is considering withdrawal from the program, you may add more pages if needed.
2. The teacher, building administrator, parent, and student would participate in the conference. At the conference an Improvement Contract would be developed. At a minimum the contract would contain:
 - a. The time frame for improvement
 - b. Specific areas the student needs to improve to remain in the program.
 - c. Measures to determine whether the needed improvement has been made.
3. At the conclusion of the time period, the school will notify the parent of one of the following:
 - a. Student is removed from the program
 - b. Student remains in the program, but continues on a contract
 - c. Student remains in the program without a continuing contract.
4. A parent may remove a student from HA with written notification.



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

Appendix D: Letter of
Acceptance into HA

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

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians of ***(student name)***,

We enjoyed the opportunity to work with your ***son/daughter*** while in ***(applicable grade)*** last year. In ***(month of testing)***, we collected information regarding ***his/her*** reasoning and achievement. The information from these assessments has led us to conclude that ***he/she*** is ready for more advanced curriculum and instruction in the area of ***language arts and/or math*** than what is typically provided in the general education classroom. Therefore, we are recommending ***he/she*** receive this advanced curriculum and instruction beginning in ***(next)*** grade.

Please know that achievement and cognitive growth in children are variable, so we will reassess again in second and fifth grade to determine that ***(student's name)*** academic placement continues to be the most appropriate for ***his/her*** learning needs. As such, ***his/her*** academic placement may be modified as a result of changes in ***his/her*** learning needs throughout elementary, middle, and high school.

We look forward to our continued work with ***(student's name)*** and your family. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(Building Principal's signature)

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

Appendix E: Reassessment Letter

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians of ***(student name)***,

We enjoyed the opportunity to work with your ***son/daughter*** while in ***(applicable grade)***. In ***(month of testing)***, we collected information regarding ***his/her*** reasoning and achievement. The information from these reassessments has led us to conclude that ***he/she*** would be best served in the general education classroom in the area of ***language arts and/or math***. Therefore, we are recommending ***he/she*** receive this general curriculum and instruction beginning in ***(next)*** grade.

Please know that achievement and cognitive growth in children are variable, so we will reassess again in ***(applicable grade)*** to determine that ***(student's name)*** academic placement continues to be the most appropriate for ***his/her*** learning needs. As such, ***his/her*** academic placement may be modified as a result of changes in ***his/her*** learning needs throughout elementary, middle, and high school.

We look forward to our continued work with ***(student's name)*** and your family. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(Building Principal's signature)

School Letterhead

Appendix E: Letter of
Removal from HA

Date

Parent
Address
City, State, Zip

Salutation:

This letter is being sent as notification that your child will be moved into the general education curriculum from the High Ability Curriculum. We have met as a team and the determination of the team is that your child will best be served academically by being exposed to a general education curriculum.

There is an appeal process that is in place should you disagree with the committee decision. The paperwork you will need can be provided by the building principal. As part of that appeal, the student may be placed on an improvement plan if that is the decided course of action. The determination of the committee after the appeal steps have been exhausted is final.

Should you have any additional questions or concerns please call the building principal or the High Ability teacher of record.

Sincerely,

Building Principal
Principal