



# Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

## High Ability Programs Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This FAQ contains information regarding the Indiana Department of Education’s (IDOE’s) requirements of high ability programs to identify and serve Indiana’s high ability students.

Number	Question	Answer
<b>Definitions and Identification</b>		
1	<b>Are all public local educational agencies (LEAs) required to have a high ability program?</b>	Yes. All public school corporations are to have a high ability program that identifies students needing more than the core curriculum to be appropriately challenged. These programs must provide differentiated curriculum and instruction to enable identified students to reach the highest possible level at every stage of student development kindergarten through grade 12.
2	<b>What is the definition of a high ability student in Indiana?</b>	High ability students as defined by <a href="#">Indiana Code (IC) 20-36-1</a> as a student who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>performs at or shows the potential for performing</i> at an outstanding level of accomplishment <i>in at least one (1) domain when compared with other students of the same age, experience, or environment;</i> and</li> <li>• is characterized by <i>exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.</i></li> </ul>
3	<b>How are students to be identified?</b>	Schools are to identify students using a multifaceted assessment process, as outlined in <a href="#">IC 20-36-2</a> , including each of the following assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance-based assessment</li> <li>• Potential-based assessment</li> <li>• Other forms of assessment</li> </ul> <p>This process is to ensure that students not identified by traditional assessments because of economic disadvantage, cultural background, underachievement, or disabilities are included. The <b>assessments must identify</b> students with high abilities <b>in the general intellectual domain and specific academic domains</b>, and the results are included with the student identification number.</p>
4	<b>What is the criteria for a high ability program?</b>	All public school corporations are to have locally-created plans that enable educational opportunities for high ability students to reach the highest possible level at every stage of the students' development, per <a href="#">IC 20-36-2</a> .  These plans are to be developed and periodically updated by the governing body. These plans are to provide appropriate educational experiences to high ability students in the school corporation in kindergarten through grade 12. To obtain specific information about your local school, contact the district high ability coordinator.



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<p>5</p>	<p><b>What qualifies as a high ability program?</b></p>	<p>In order to qualify as a high ability program, per <a href="#">Indiana Administrative Code (IAC) 511-6-9.1-2</a>, a school must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educational opportunities that encourage high ability students to <b>reach the highest possible level at every stage of development.</b></li> <li>● <b>A differentiated program for high ability students</b> and include the following plans filed at IDOE and available for public review:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>A multifaceted student assessment plan</b>, including:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Performance-based assessments.</li> <li>■ Potential-based assessments.</li> <li>■ Other forms of assessments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>A curriculum and instructional strategies plan.</b></li> <li>○ <b>A counseling and guidance plan.</b></li> <li>○ <b>A systematic program assessment plan.</b></li> <li>○ <b>A professional development plan.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Educational experiences offered during the school day</b> for high ability students (after school programs may supplement not supplant).</li> <li>● <b>A broad-based planning committee</b> to design and monitor the continuous development and implementation of the levels of services for high ability students.</li> <li>● Approval by the local governing body.</li> </ul>
<p>6</p>	<p><b>What types of tests are required in the multifaceted assessment process for identification of high ability students?</b></p>	<p><b>Aptitude Test Data:</b> Data should be taken from a norm-referenced measure of verbal and quantitative reasoning skills.</p> <p><b>Achievement Test Data:</b> Data should be taken from norm-referenced adaptive formative or interim assessments. Criterion based assessments do not provide a fully accurate measure of high ability.</p> <p><b>Observational Data:</b> Data should be used as a supplement to the quantitative data from ability and achievement and not used on its own unless the observational tool used has demonstrated validity for predicting high ability performance.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><b>What are other processes that allow for students to show their exceptional talents, motivations, and interests?</b></p>	<p><b>Performance Tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide open-ended learning opportunities allowing students to show potential through performance.</li> <li>● Observational inventories that provide performance tasks could be administered virtually.</li> </ul>
<p>8</p>	<p><b>In what grades should the multifaceted assessment process for high ability identification occur?</b></p>	<p>It is recommended to formally identify all students at key shifts in district structure that are typically aligned with students' cognitive development. These shifts typically occur between kindergarten to first grade, primary to intermediate elementary, intermediate elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school. Grades kindergarten, second, and fifth grade are the most</p>



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		common identification years.
9	<b>Are students to be assessed every year for high ability identification?</b>	This is a local determination as set by the submitted multifaceted assessment plan for identification that is on file at IDOE. The process for identification must be inclusive and provide continuous access and opportunity to all students who need more than the core curriculum provides to be appropriately challenged at all stages of development.
10	<b>Do students need to show high ability in all domains to be identified?</b>	No. A student may be designated as high ability in math, English/language arts, general intellectual (both math and English/language arts), and/or other. The student must receive differentiated curriculum and instruction in the areas of their designated high ability. If the designation of ‘other’ is chosen, subsequent services must be defined and differentiated curriculum and instruction provided.
11	<b>Once a student is designated high ability, does this designation ever change?</b>	A student is defined as high ability if they perform or show the potential to perform at an outstanding level in comparison to peers of the same age, experience, and environment. The parameters of this are determined locally and may be different between districts. Additionally, as a student develops, they may begin to be appropriately challenged without the need for additional differentiated curriculum and instruction specific to high ability. School districts are to have an exit policy in place for situations in which a student no longer needs high ability programming.
12	<b>Can the ILEARN Checkpoints going into effect in the 2025-26 school year be used for high ability identification? What about the pilot?</b>	The ILEARN Checkpoints in the pilot and after full implementation may be used as the achievement measure for HA identification for grades 3-8. Grades K-2 will need a different norm-referenced, adaptive measure of achievement.
<b>Supporting Academic Success</b>		
13	<b>What is the recommended exit process for students no longer reaching stage-level development from high ability services?</b>	Each district is recommended to have an exit process in place that should be no less in duration than one semester. This process should include a team composed of the parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher(s), administrator(s), counselor(s), and the student. It is recommended that the team meet regularly during this process to determine the optimal course of action to allow the student to reach <b>the highest possible level at every stage of development.</b>
14	<b>Are high ability designated students required to take advanced courses in high school?</b>	No. However, a student who is designated as high ability must be receiving a differentiated curriculum and instruction in the domain of their ability. For instance, if they are designated as high ability in math, then they should be enrolled in the highest level math course at each grade level in order to be appropriately challenged. If they are appropriately challenged in a general math course, then they must have gone through the exit process and are no longer designated high ability.



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<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>Should all students enrolled in an advanced course in high school be designated as high ability?</b></p>	<p>No. Advanced courses must be open to all students regardless of their high ability designation.</p>
<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>What are Graduation Pathways?</b></p>	<p>Students, beginning with the graduating class of 2023, must adhere to <a href="#">Indiana's Graduation Pathways</a> and satisfy at least one option from each of the three boxes in order to graduate. The three boxes are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>High School Diploma</i>: Students must complete the course &amp; credit requirements for the HS diploma,</li> <li>2. <i>Learn &amp; Demonstrate Employability Skills</i>: Students must complete a Project-Based, Service-Based, or Work-Based Learning Experience;</li> <li>3. <i>Postsecondary-Ready Competency</i>: Students must complete at least one approved option.</li> </ol> <p>View this <a href="#">resource</a> for more information.</p>
<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>Are Graduation Pathways required?</b></p>	<p>Yes, <a href="#">Graduation Pathways</a> are required for students beginning in the graduating class of 2023.</p>
<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>Are subsidies available for Advanced Placement (AP) or other advanced course testing?</b></p>	<p>IDOE continues to support Indiana students through AP and Cambridge International exam funding. The state's biennial budget provides funding to cover the exam fees for AP and Cambridge International exams taken by Indiana students in grades nine through 12 who are enrolled in an accredited public or non-public school. A maximum of three exams per student, per year may be funded. Additional information can be found in <a href="#">this memo</a>.</p>
<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>Must all identified students receive the same services?</b></p>	<p>No. Tremendous variability exists among those with high ability. Some students need services only in math or only in English/language arts. Additionally, local school districts may offer different levels of coursework with placement dependent on different data points established locally.</p> <p>One size does not fit all. Students with ability alone need instruction at a faster pace and greater depth but not at the same level as those with high ability and, correspondingly, high achievement. Some students will score high on both ability and performance indicators, while others may only score high on the ability measure due to a lack of opportunity to learn prior to school or a disability (twice exceptionality). Both groups of students are identified as high ability and should be provided appropriately differentiated curriculum and instruction to meet their needs.</p>



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20	<b>Who is the primary contact in a school district for concerns or questions regarding high ability programming?</b>	Start with your student’s teacher. They should be able to explain what accommodations are being made for high ability students, or should refer you to the district high ability coordinator for clarification. You may also email IDOE’s <a href="#">Office of Student Pathways High Ability team</a> for additional support.
21	<b>If I move and my student changes school districts, can I expect they will receive the exact same high ability programming in the new district?</b>	Not necessarily. While Indiana requires that public schools provide high ability accommodations, each local school district determines how those services will be delivered. When planning a move, reach out to the new district to find out what services are available so you can be prepared.
<b>Fiscal</b>		
22	<b>Where do I go for grants, budgets and finance information?</b>	IDOE’s <a href="#">High Ability Program Grant webpage</a> has links to updated forms, deadlines, and other financial information. Additionally, you will find helpful resources on IDOE’s <a href="#">High Ability Education webpage</a> in the High Ability Coordinator Handbook.
23	<b>Does the state offer reimbursement for in-person college courses taken by high school students?</b>	No, the state does not provide reimbursement for college courses for high school students. Many schools offer AP and dual enrollment courses at the local level at a lower cost, and several options for college-level classes are available via <a href="#">Indiana’s Course Access Portal (iCAP)</a> . Schools offering AP, International Baccalaureate (IB), dual credit, and/or honors courses for high ability students fulfill the requirements regarding high ability under Indiana Code.
<b>Non-Public Schools</b>		
24	<b>My child has been identified as high ability, but attends a non-public school through a school choice voucher. What services must be provided, and is there grant money available to pay for extracurricular high ability programming?</b>	In Indiana, the High Ability Code and the High Ability Grant only applies to students in public schools. Non-public schools set their own guidelines and requirements for meeting student needs.

Contact IDOE’s [Office of Student Pathways High Ability team](#) for more information.

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