

School District of Seward Mission Statement

Our mission statement, our statement of purpose, is "Every Student, Every Day, A Success." It will be an inspiration and driving force for all we do in the district and provide us with direction as we work toward our school improvement goals.

High Ability Learner Program Philosophy

We believe that students learn best when they are challenged and nurtured in methods that are commensurate with the levels of their abilities. It is the responsibility of the school to facilitate and/or provide opportunities to meet the needs of each of our students.

Nebraska Department of Education RULE 3

Regulations Governing the Identification of High Ability Learners

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 3

002 Definitions

002.01. **Learner with High Ability.** "Learner with high ability means a student who gives evidence of high performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, or artistic capacity or in specific academic fields and who requires services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to develop those capabilities fully."

[as defined in Nebraska revised Statute Sec. 79-1107 (3)]

002-02 **Special Populations.** Those students who, in order to meet their learning needs, may require different and/or special strategies.

- **Evaluation.** A process of using information about programming to guide decision-making in present and future efforts. Its purpose includes: guiding planning for maintaining or improving programming, comparing and selecting among several options or alternatives, and judging whether stated goals and objectives have been attained.

Additional Definitions:

Learner with High Ability shall mean a student, grades K-12 who gives evidence of high performance capability in specific academic areas and who requires services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to develop those capabilities fully.

Special Populations are students who, in order to meet their learning needs, may require different and/or special strategies.

Differentiated Curriculum is adjusting of the regular plan for students in content, process and/or product.

Acceleration of Curriculum has students enter or move through the regular curriculum at an accelerated pace.

Enrichment of the Curriculum provides for students to concentrate on in-depth and/or multi-disciplinary exploration of content and courses taught. Experiences are provided beyond the regular curriculum.

Curriculum Compacting is assessing students for mastery of the content in a course. After mastery of content is shown the students may substitute other studies of interest.

Grouping of Students is organizing students in various ways that meet the learning styles and curricular needs of individual learners.

Mentoring/Shadowing is linking a student or students, with a person having a specific knowledge base, in a short-term or in-depth sharing, resulting in a series of learning experiences.

Goals

The Learner Will:

- Be able to use critical inquiry
- Approach/solve a problem/task in a creative manner
- Be able to formulate and defend opinions
- Develop connections between present learning and previous learning
- Be able to employ personal learning strengths
- Be willing to take risks in his/her areas of talent
- Be able to express the need/want to be challenged
- Have gained the self-confidence to continue his/her interests in areas of talent
- Improve problem solving and decision making abilities
- Demonstrate the ability to work independently and with others
- Employ technology to enhance learning
- Develop understanding of and the ability to work with diverse cultures
- Communicate effectively (written, oral, pictorial, and/or non-verbal)
- Demonstrate growth in talent areas
- Be exposed to careers related to talent areas

Resources

- Counselors
- Career Fair/day/activities/software
- ESU #6 High Ability Learner Coordinator
- Mentors (community . . . college . . . high school)
- Talent pool
- District HAL Coordinator
- Teachers
- Parents
- Local/Regional facilities (i.e. museums . . . galleries . . . cultural centers . . . post secondary institutions)
- Staff Development/Curriculum Director

Responsibilities of the Teacher

- Display knowledge of the characteristics of high ability learners.
- Recommend students for inclusion in the High Ability Learner Program.
- Become aware of the needs and interests of identified students.
- Participate in the development of each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Provide extended opportunities for learning through compacting of the regular curriculum where appropriate.
- Assist the student in finding direction through discussion, suggestions, provisions for time, and materials.
- Remember that the High Ability Learner student should be provided with **different** activities/projects/assignments, not **more**.
- Monitor the student's progress on differentiated activities and projects.
- Share progress on the IEP with parents at regular parent-teacher conference times, as well as other times, when appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Student

- Provide data relative to needs, interests, and task commitment.
- Participate in the development of your Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Demonstrate awareness that all children have special gifts/talents.
- Demonstrate a willingness to learn.
- Demonstrate mastery of the regular curricular requirements.
- Use time, materials, and opportunities for different projects/activities to challenge your capabilities.
- Develop a plan for a project, and complete it in an appropriate amount of time.
- Maintain communication with teachers and parents regarding your interests, your needs, and your progress on activities.
- Evaluate your work on a continual basis.

Responsibilities of the Parent(s)

- Provide data relative to their child's needs, interests, and attributes.
- Participate in the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Provide opportunities for enrichment in the family setting.
- Assist the child through discussion, suggestions, and encouragement.
- Provide feedback for the teacher at regular parent-teacher conference times, as well as other times, when appropriate.

Identification and Implementation

Identification and implementation of the High Ability Learner Program will be facilitated by the District wide Leadership Team for the High Ability Learner consisting of elementary, middle school, and high school teachers, and the High Ability Learner coordinator. The identification process includes multiple criteria in an effort to be inclusive rather than exclusive. The process is based on a combination of standardized instruments and non-standardized means and criteria. Nominations for the High Ability Learner Program will be due October 15, January 15, and April 15 of each academic year. Following receipt of the nominations the Leadership Team will review all supporting materials for possible identification. (See Appendices A - L)

Curriculum for identified High Ability Learner students incorporates the core curriculum of the classroom with a differentiated curriculum. An individual education program will be created by student, parent(s), and teacher(s) for each identified learner beginning at Grade 4. To glean interest areas for use in the development of an I.E.P., the High Ability Learner Coordinator will conduct a personal interview of the identified student. Prior to Grade 4 high ability learners are nurtured through differentiated curriculum and enrichment activities. The program seeks to achieve excellence by building upon the strengths and interests of the students and by focusing on the delivery of five major services to these students.

1. identifying student's academic strengths, interests and learning styles
2. curriculum compacting
3. general exploratory activities
4. group activities that develop higher level thinking and affective processes
5. individual and small group investigation of real problems

Art identification will be based on a portfolio collection of student work. Materials will be collected by classroom teachers and evaluated by art specialists. The School District of Seward and the community provide exploratory and extracurricular opportunities for enrichment in:

- drama
- foreign language
- music
- athletics
- leadership

Evaluation

Evaluation of the High Ability Learner Program will be an ongoing process using research based information about programming, and input from administrators, teachers, parents and students. Programming decisions will be based on information received through the evaluative process and compliance to state goals and objectives according to Rule 3.

Appeal

An appeal of a non-identification decision by the District wide Leadership Team for the High Ability Learner can be presented for consideration at anytime. A written request for appeal should be sent to the High Ability Learner Coordinator. The HAL Coordinator will then contact the HAL Team regarding a reconsideration meeting.