



# **Challenge Program for High Ability Students**

## **Vision for our Students:**

**“We exist so children can excel”**

The Challenge Program at the elementary with students in Grade K-2, offers services by identifying students and differentiating instruction within small cluster groups within the general education classroom. In reading and language arts high ability students are identified and placed in advanced guided reading groups for instruction. In mathematics, identified students are grouped in clusters of high ability students who receive advanced math instruction.

The Challenge Program at the elementary with students in grades 3-6 consists of self-contained classrooms where high ability students are grouped together with subject areas accelerated and more in-depth and complex thinking skills and content.

The Challenge Program at Franklin County Middle School allows students to be identified and participate in Honors classes in English/Language Arts, mathematics and science. Students can gain high school credit in Algebra I, Introduction to Agriculture, Chinese and Preparing for College and Careers before entering Franklin County High School.

The Challenge Program at Franklin County High School offers a menu of course work on an elective basis. Students can elect to take Advanced Placement classes and dual credit courses earning college credits from Ivy Tech, Indiana University and Butler University. Counselors assist students with information from the PSAT test to determine potential to enroll in the courses that will challenge them. Talented students may also wish to enroll in fine arts offerings where advanced coursework is available for students who elect to complete the coursework.

**Definition of High Ability:** Indiana State Definition IC 20-10.1-5.1-2

- (1) performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment in a least one domain when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment; and
- (2) is characterized by exceptional gifts, or talents.

**Goals for Challenge and AP/Honors Class students:**

The program goals for students in the high ability programs are as follows:

1. Accelerate the mastery of curriculum skills beyond the grade-specific curriculum;
2. Differentiate the curriculum and instructional strategies qualitatively for identified students.
3. Provide for more in-depth and more complex thinking skills.
4. Utilize technology for student projects and products.
5. Plan for advanced study skills through application of independence, self-direction, and self-evaluation.
6. Promote analysis, evaluation, and application in research to create high-quality products from class assignments.

**Student Assessment for Identification:**

Students are assessed for possible identification and placement through the use of standardized tests, teacher recommendations, checklists, writing samples and rubrics, grades and prerequisite courses.

**Program Descriptions and Identification Process**

**Grades K, 2, and 6**

Students are identified for placement based upon their achievement on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and NWEA MAP percentile scores.

Identified students in grades 3-6 may be placed in self-contained classes for Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students are scheduled in music, art, Physical Education and library with other students in their grade level. Problem-solving activities and higher levels of thinking are promoted through hands-on activities and research projects. The curriculum is rigorous and requires additional readings and more advanced project-based homework. Some of the curriculum is “looped” for use in grades 3-4 and in grades 5-6.

## **Grades 7 and 8**

Academically talented students who have successfully completed the Challenge Program may be placed in Honors courses at Franklin County Middle School. Students are also identified for placement in Algebra I based upon their achievement on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the NWEA MAP assessment. Students must maintain expectations and grades in order to progress from one level to the next.

## **Grades 9-12 Honors and Advanced Placement Courses:**

All students enrolled in Honors English 8 and all students who have potential for success in the advanced Language Arts English classes are also encouraged to enroll in English Honors 9. Counselors will assist students and their parents in making appropriate course selections.

### **Advanced Placement Courses and Dual Credit Classes**

Selected courses are available at Franklin County High School which require significantly higher academic achievement and work levels. The grades earned in Advanced Placement courses are weighted for the purpose of determining Grade Point Average (GPA) and class rank; therefore students are encouraged to enroll in more challenging courses without being penalized for possible lower grades.

Through The College Board, students may earn Advanced Placement credit at many colleges or universities of their choice by taking Advanced Placement courses in English, Math, Art, World Languages and Science as well as other honors classes in preparation for advanced placement testing. Students can earn college credit from Dual Credit classes taught by teachers with additional college training. If students score at the 3, 4, or 5 level on AP exams, selected colleges and universities may grant college credit by the college admission office.

## **Identification and Selection Process**

### **Secondary Identification and Selection Process:**

PSAT Scores  
Standardized Test Scores  
Grades earned  
GPA for high school

Honors classes in grades 7 and 8 utilize self-contained classes with a differentiated curriculum that is advanced in content and expectations. Differentiated instructional strategies are used and student products are varied with interest.

Guidance counselors assist students and parents in making course and program choices. For students who are identified and enrolled in the Challenge/Honors programs and have successfully completed the classes qualify for Honors and AP classes. However, if a student has not been identified for Challenge/Honors classes by 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the student or parent may request

an appeal for placement or request a teacher to complete a recommendation form. In order for parents and students to know the rigor for the coursework, a counselor may be consulted for PSAT scores for “potential” success in an AP class.

Counselors may review ILEARN Pass results and NWEA scores for grade 8 students who wish to enroll in Grade 9 Honors classes. \*Individual student GPA (grade point average) may be used for reference.

Prerequisites are required for placement in upper level Honors and AP classes and the prerequisites may be found in the Course Selection Guide, available on the high school website.

### **Teacher or Parent Appeals:**

Teachers may recommend students for the High Ability programs and services at any time. Teachers may elect to complete a recommendation packet for a student who moves in or may request additional testing for a student, if the student does not meet identification requirements. A teacher may complete a checklist of attributes for each student to be considered for further assessments and possible placement.

At any time, parents may appeal the committee’s decision by completing an appropriate appeal form to have their children participate in additional screening. This appeal must be in writing and include reasons why the student should be reconsidered.

At the middle school, the criteria for appeal for placement in the English Honors classes will include:

1. Teacher Recommendation
2. Test Results from ILEARN or equivalent and NWEA or equivalent

A committee of school administrators and teachers will review the appeal and any additional pertinent information to make a final decision. A parent will be contacted after the committee considers the appeal for possible placement.

Students identified for the high ability programs and their parents are invited to attend a parent orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year for elementary students in grades 3-6. The meeting is focused on discussing program expectations and requesting parents to ask questions regarding the curriculum and the materials.

### **Program Placement and Withdrawal**

It is expected that students will continue in the Challenge Program for the entire year. If, however, the program is found to be an inappropriate educational placement for the student and the student returns to the regular classroom, a withdrawal form will be completed.

Students may be recommended for possible placement in the Challenge Program at any time. However, students are normally placed, if they qualify, at the beginning of a semester. Students new to the district will be tested prior to placement if the parent requests placement. Students who have been identified for gifted programming in another school district will be considered for placement only after completing similar testing protocols to those assessments required by students locally enrolled in the high ability classes.

At the high school level, parents and students should review the requirements that are required for college level equivalent coursework and the Advanced Placement curriculum.

### **Exiting Procedures**

Procedure for withdrawal may include:

1. Communication regarding concerns of student placement in the high ability program should occur first at the building level.
2. If the above means of communication has not produced a satisfactory resolution to the stated concern(s), a formal exit conference will be scheduled.
3. A period of “probation” may be considered, if needed. This probation period will extend through an agreed-upon time frame. At the conclusion of the pre-stated time frame, a determination will be made to continue or exit the student from the program or class. The parent will be notified.

### **Guidance and Counseling:**

Middle and high school counselors assist students in making their course selections as well as with other academic issues. Elementary students are provided with guidance and counseling support through their teachers and administrators. In all cases, staff is committed to assisting students as they engage in challenging activities with confidence and success.

### **Professional Development:**

Professional development is offered to staff members who work with high-ability students. The teacher evaluation system has identified differentiation as an area of concentration. Training is accomplished in a variety of ways:

- (a) Elementary teachers in K-2 receive training through the Literacy Coach for the reading program including differentiation of reading assignments that challenge students.
- (b) Elementary teachers meet periodically throughout the year to share ideas and write curriculum.
- (c) Middle school and high school teachers meet both separately and together to collaborate and/or receive training in higher order questioning strategies.

- (d) All teachers receive training in differentiation.
- (e) Teachers are encouraged to attend the Indiana Association for Gifted conference.
- (f) Advanced Placement training is offered to secondary teachers.
- (g) Multiple other professional opportunities are also available for staff to attend, as needed, at state meetings and workshops.

### **Program Assessment Plan:**

A variety of methods are used to assess programs and services for high-ability students. One of the responsibilities of the Broad Based Planning Committee (BBPC).

### **Test Definitions and Descriptions**

#### **Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) (Measure of Potential to Learn at High Levels).**

The cognitive abilities test has reliability measures of thinking skills and abilities. There are five subtests: Verbal Comprehension, Verbal Reasoning, Pictorial Reasoning, Figural Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning. The scores can measure above grade level ability. This test is used as a wide screening instrument in grades K, 2, and 6. .

#### **Northwest Evaluation Assessment (Measures of Academic Progress) Tests**

These are achievement tests administered to students in grades K-12 that can range to off grade level items, depending upon the students' achievement level. They measure achievement in reading, math and language. The test is administered to groups of students in computer labs in scheduled test sessions three times a year.

#### **Orleans-Hanna Algebra Prognosis Test**

This test indicates a student's ability to study and understand algebra. A student does not need to have taken pre-algebra or algebra to score well on this test. The test is administered to all students in grade 6.