



Challenge Program for High Ability Students

Vision for our Students:

“We exist so children can excel”

The Challenge Program at the elementary level, with students in Grades K-3 and 6, 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 level, serving students in grades 4-5, consists of self-contained classrooms where high-ability students are grouped, with subject areas accelerated and more in-depth, allowing for more 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, Preparing for College and Careers, and any other high school course offered at the middle school level before entering Franklin County High School as a freshman.

The Challenge Program at Franklin County High School offers a menu of elective coursework. Students can elect to take Advanced Placement classes and dual credit courses, earning college credits from Ivy Tech and Indiana University. Counselors help students interpret information from the PSAT test to determine their potential for enrolling in classes that will challenge them. Talented students may also wish to enroll in fine arts offerings, where advanced coursework is available for those who elect to pursue it.

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 at 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
3. Encourage more in-depth and complex thinking skills.
4. Utilize technology for student projects and products.
5. Plan for advanced study skills by applying independence, self-direction, and self-evaluation.
6. Promote analysis, evaluation, and application in research to create high-quality products from class assignments.

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.

Elementary Students

Identification process:

Students who score an overall score of 8 or 9 on the CogAT are automatically identified for the Challenge program. Parents are sent an email making them aware that their child will receive services within the general education classroom.

In grades 4 and 5, students are allowed to be placed in a self-contained high-ability classroom. Below is the criteria for placement:

- 1) Score an overall 8 or 9 on CogAT.
- 2) Score of 8 or 9 on a sub-test within CogAT.
- 3) Score above grade level in either math or reading on the Universal Screener.
- 4) The building principal initiated teacher recommendations.

Students identified in K, 1, 2, 3, and 6, as needing exceptional support, will receive

differentiated instruction within their classroom and during WIN time. Students in grades 4-5 who have been identified as needing exceptional support may be placed in self-contained classes for reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. Problem-solving activities and higher levels of thinking are promoted through hands-on projects and research activities. The curriculum is rigorous and requires additional readings, as well as more advanced project-based homework. Some of the curriculum is “looped” for use in grades 4-5.

Grades 7 and 8

Academically talented students who have 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), NWEA MAP assessment, and ILEARN. Students must meet expectations and maintain their grades to progress from one level to the next. Students are automatically enrolled in Honors courses at Franklin County Middle School if they are “Above Proficient” on ILEARN and “C” or higher in the student’s math coursework.

Grades 9-12 Honors and Advanced Placement Courses:

All students enrolled in Honors English 8 and those with 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 that require significantly higher academic achievement and work levels. The grades earned in Advanced Placement courses are weighted to determine 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 (AP) credit at many colleges or universities of their choice by taking AP courses in English, Math, Art, World Languages, and Science, as well as other honors classes in preparation for AP testing. Students can earn college credit from Dual Credit classes taught by teachers who have received additional college training. If students score at the 3, 4, or 5 level on AP exams, selected colleges and universities may grant college credit through the college admission office.

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 employed, and student products are varied according to individual interests.

Guidance counselors help students and parents make informed choices about courses and programs. For students who are identified and enrolled in the Challenge/Honors programs and have completed the required classes they qualify for Honors and AP classes. However, suppose a student has not been identified for Challenge or Honors classes by the end of 9th grade. In that case, the student or parent may request an appeal for placement or ask a teacher to complete a recommendation form. 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 these prerequisites can be found in the Course Selection Guide, available on the high school website.

Teacher or Parent Appeals:

Teachers may elect to complete a recommendation packet for a student who moves in or may request additional testing for a student if they do not meet the 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 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.

Program Placement and Withdrawal

It is expected that students will continue in the Challenge Program for the entire year. If, however, the program is deemed an inappropriate educational placement by the parent's

request, a meeting will be held with the parent, principal, and assistant superintendent, and the student will return to the regular classroom.

Students are placed, if they qualify, at the beginning of the school year. Students new to the district will be tested before 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 required for students locally enrolled in high-ability classes.

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

Concerns with Programming

The procedure for concerns may include:

1. Communication regarding concerns of student placement in the high-ability program should occur first at the building level and be initiated by the parent or guardian.
2. If the above means of communication have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the stated concern(s), a meeting with the assistant superintendent will occur.

Guidance and Counseling:

Middle and high school counselors assist students in making their course selections as well as with other academic issues. Elementary students receive 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 weekly in grade-level meetings, monthly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and participate in professional learning days to share ideas and develop lessons.
- (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 from off-grade-level items, depending on 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 sixth-grade students.