

MCCSC High Ability Programs

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A Brief History

Programming designed for high ability students has been present in the MCCSC since the early 1970's when a mentorship program that paired students with mentors in areas of mutual interest was initiated. In 1985, a rudimentary form of our current elementary ALPS program was initiated. It quickly expanded and evolved into the elementary ALPS program offered at this time.

Middle school classes for advanced English and social studies were initiated in 1988; advanced science classes were added in 1995. World language classes and algebra and geometry courses have also been added to the middle school curriculum.

High school opportunities have expanded continuously to include the large range of choices listed. Our high schools graduate several National Merit Scholarship finalists annually as well as recipients of many scholarships and post-secondary opportunities.

The Office of High Ability Education utilizes both state grant and local school corporation funds to serve the needs of high ability students in the Monroe County Community School Corporation. The Coordinator works with the local Broad-Based Planning Committee/High Ability Task Force (composed of parents, school personnel, students, and community representatives) to ensure compliance with state and local requirements.

Throughout the MCCSC, students are provided with differentiated instruction and opportunities for acceleration. These opportunities are not restricted to students who are formally identified as high ability. Individual teachers and building principals work to develop the most appropriate educational experience possible for each child. These options may include grade level high ability cluster groups, grade skipping, flexible ability grouping for math and language arts, and inquiry based instruction.

For students in grades four to eight who clearly demonstrate high academic and intellectual ability, the MCCSC offers the **Accelerated Learning Program for Students** or **ALPS**. Any child may apply for the ALPS program; families that are interested in this opportunity should speak with their child's teacher or principal. Families may also contact the Office of High Ability Education.

Elementary ALPS

The Elementary ALPS Program is available to students in grades four, five, and six who are formally identified as being high ability students. At this level, one self-contained classroom at each grade is housed at University Elementary School. This humanities-based program offers high ability students the opportunity to complete grade-level requirements as well as participate in appropriate enrichment and acceleration activities in all areas of the curriculum. Children also have the opportunity

to work with other grade-level students at University School throughout the day in other subject areas.

Middle School ALPS

All three MCCSC middle schools offer self-contained ALPS sections for identified high ability students in grades seven and eight. The ALPS program at this level focuses on a core of English, social studies, and science courses. Students of high ability in mathematics may also be identified to participate in advanced coursework (e.g., algebra or geometry). Middle school ALPS students enroll in additional regular classes to meet the curricular requirements of the State of Indiana.

Opportunities for High Ability High School Students

High ability classes are self-selected at the high school level. Bloomington High School North, Bloomington High School South, and The Academy of Science and Entrepreneurship offer honors level classes, Advanced Placement courses, and Advanced College Project courses in many content areas. The high schools also provide release time for students to attend classes on the Indiana University and Ivy Tech campuses. The high ability program is designed to promote and enhance the intellectual and creative abilities of high school students in our community. Components of the high ability program include curriculum acceleration options and curriculum enrichment options. Students who are interested in any of these options should contact their high school counselor.

High Ability Identification

Participation in the elementary and middle school ALPS programs requires that a child be formally identified as intellectually and academically high ability by the appropriate identification committee. Members of the identification committees are experienced and licensed in gifted/talented education. The Identification Committees examine multiple indicators for high ability identification including a cognitive skills index (CSI), reading achievement, a teacher referral, a parent referral, a standardized writing sample, a student selected piece of writing, and classroom performance. Placement in advanced math classes is a separate identification process.

High ability classes are self-selective and available to *any* student at the high school level. High school students who have been previously identified as high ability or want to apply for high ability identification are eligible to participate in a range of accelerated or alternative study opportunities.

A student may self-nominate or a parent or teacher may nominate a student, for high ability identification. For information about high ability identification, contact your child's teacher, counselor, or principal.

Professional Staff

Many teachers of ALPS classes at the elementary and middle school levels have met state requirements for licensure in gifted and talented education or may be working toward this licensure. All ALPS teachers receive training in differentiation instruction. Teachers of AP courses at the high schools complete an intensive training experience in order to teach at this level. The Office of High Ability Education has provided professional development for MCCSC teachers in differentiated instruction, curriculum development, and shared inquiry leadership. Teachers are also provided with opportunities to attend state and national professional conferences in high ability education and curriculum development.