

Crofton's High Ability Learner (HAL) Program

Crofton Community Schools

Recognizing Potential. Growing Talents. Inspiring Possibilities.

Every Student Has Strengths Worth Growing!

At Crofton Community Schools, we believe that students have unique strengths, talents, and potential. Our **High Ability Learner (HAL) Program** provides additional opportunities for students who demonstrate advanced abilities or show exceptional potential in academics, creativity, leadership, problem-solving, or other areas.

Our goal is to challenge students, encourage curiosity, develop their talents, and help them grow into confident, independent learners.

We recognize that high ability looks different in every child. Some students excel academically, while others show exceptional creativity, innovative thinking, leadership, or talents that test scores may not always reflect.

What Does Our HAL Program Offer?

Our HAL Program encourages students to go beyond traditional classroom learning by providing opportunities to:

- **Explore & Discover:** Investigate personal interests, ask questions, and explore new ideas.
- **Create & Innovate:** Design, build, experiment, and develop original solutions.
- **Think Critically:** Solve challenging problems and apply learning to real-world situations.
- **Lead & Collaborate:** Develop communication, teamwork, and leadership skills.
- **Grow Independently:** Set goals, take ownership of learning, and reflect on progress.

HAL Opportunities by Grade Level

Our program grows with students, offering different experiences as they move through elementary, middle, and high school.

Grades 4–6 | STEAM Enrichment

Explore. Create. Discover.

Students engage in hands-on, project-based learning that integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM).

Activities may include robotics, coding, engineering challenges, digital design, media production, creative problem-solving, and other innovative projects.

Students are encouraged to experiment, learn from mistakes, and turn their ideas into creations.

Grades 7–8 | Innovation Studio

Design. Collaborate. Innovate.

Students build on their creative and problem-solving abilities through individual and collaborative projects.

Opportunities focus on engineering, digital design, makerspace activities, entrepreneurship, and real-world challenges.

Students build independence while learning to collaborate, think creatively and strategically, and bring ideas to life.

Grades 9–12 | HAL Exploration

Discover Your Strengths. Explore Your Future.

As students enter high school, our HAL program becomes more flexible and personalized, giving students opportunities to explore their interests, develop their talents, and connect their strengths to future goals.

We recognize that high school students are often busy with academics, extracurricular activities, and other commitments. With that in mind, students can choose how they participate, whether through group activities, individual challenges, or independent projects during homeroom.

HAL activities may include:

- **Quiz Bowl** – Challenge your knowledge and quick thinking.
- **Stock Market Challenge** – Explore investing, financial literacy, and decision-making.
- **Strategic Games** – Build critical thinking, problem-solving, and strategy skills.
- **Can You Solve the Challenge?** – Put creativity, logic, and teamwork to the test.

Students are also encouraged to extend their learning by:

- Taking advanced coursework and online dual-credit classes.
- Pursuing independent studies and passion projects based on their interests and talents.
- Exploring opportunities that connect their strengths to college, careers, and future goals.

Our goal is to provide opportunities that challenge and inspire students while giving them the flexibility to pursue their individual interests, develop their talents, and explore future possibilities.

How Are Students Identified for HAL?

Crofton Community Schools uses a **multiple-measures approach** to identify High Ability Learners. This means we look at more than just one test score.

Students may be identified through academic achievement, teacher recommendations, student work, creative abilities, leadership, and other evidence of advanced potential.

Academic Qualification Pathways

Students may qualify through any of the following:

Pathway	Qualification
High Achievement	90th percentile or above in one tested area
Multiple Strengths	80th percentile or above in two tested areas
Achievement + Teacher Recommendation	80th percentile or above in one area, along with supporting teacher evidence
Achievement + Portfolio	80th percentile or above, along with student work demonstrating advanced abilities

Academic assessments include **MAP** and Nebraska's **NSCAS** assessments in **Reading, Math, and Science**.

What if My Child Is Talented but Doesn't Meet the Test Scores?

Test scores are not the only way we recognize high ability!

Some students demonstrate exceptional potential through creativity, leadership, motivation, problem-solving, or other talents.

Students may also be considered using multiple forms of evidence, including:

- Teacher observations and recommendations
- Parent or student nominations
- Portfolios and examples of student work
- Creative projects and performance tasks
- Evidence of exceptional potential

Our goal is to recognize both students who are already achieving at advanced levels and those whose talents are still developing.

Can Parents Recommend Their Child?

Yes! Parents and guardians play an important role in helping us recognize student strengths.

If you believe your child demonstrates exceptional abilities or potential, we encourage you to contact our HAL team to discuss the identification process.

We welcome information about talents, interests, accomplishments, and strengths you observe outside of school.

What if My Child Transfers to Crofton?

Students who participated in a High Ability Learner program at another school will have their previous records reviewed by our HAL Coordinator.

We consider previous identification, assessment results, and services to help determine appropriate opportunities at Crofton. Additional information may be gathered if needed.

Supporting Every Student's Success

We want HAL to be a positive, challenging, and rewarding experience.

Students are encouraged to participate, take appropriate learning risks, and develop independence. We also recognize that students' needs and interests can change.

If a student is struggling with participation or the program no longer feels like the right fit, our school team will work with the student and family to discuss concerns, explore supports, and determine next steps.

A student may exit the program through a written agreement involving the student, parent/guardian, and teacher.

What if I Have Questions About an Identification Decision?

We are committed to a fair and transparent identification process.

If a parent or guardian has concerns about their child's identification, placement, or HAL services, they may request a review.

How to request a review:

1. Submit a written or email request to Lisa Pack, lpack@croftonwarriors.org, within 30 school days of the decision.
2. Include the reason for your request and any additional information you would like considered.
3. A school team will review the information and provide a written response within 30 school days.
4. If concerns remain, families may request a meeting with a member of our HAL team.

Our goal is to work together to support each student's learning needs.

How Do We Know Our Program Is Making a Difference?

Each year, Crofton Community Schools reviews the HAL Program to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

We consider student growth, participation, projects, portfolios, and feedback from students, parents, and teachers.

We also review our identification procedures to help ensure students with different strengths and backgrounds have opportunities to be recognized and supported.

Meet Our HAL Team

Our HAL team works with students, families, and teachers to identify strengths, coordinate learning opportunities, and support student growth.

- **Frank Gade** — HAL Coordinator and Grades 9–12 Lead
- **Teresa O'Brien** — Grades 7–8 HAL Lead
- **Lisa Pack** — Grades 4–6 HAL Lead

Have Questions? We'd Love to Hear From You!

Whether you're wondering about identification, interested in learning opportunities, or simply want to share something special about your child's abilities, we welcome your questions.

Contact our HAL Coordinator or your child's HAL grade-level lead through Crofton Community Schools.

Together, we can help every learner discover their strengths, explore their passions, and achieve their personal best!

Crofton Community Schools' High Ability Learner Program follows Nebraska Rule 3 guidelines. This webpage provides a family-friendly overview of our program. For complete identification procedures, program policies, and requirements, please refer to our official 2026–27 HAL Plan.