Mitchell Public Schools
High Ability Learner Plan
Updated: Fall 2020

Mission:

The mission of the High Ability Learner (HALs) program is to recognize, support, and respect the exceptional intellectual, academic and social-emotional needs of high ability learners. We are committed to providing rigorous, differentiated opportunities that intellectually and personally empower students in a safe and supporting environment.

Philosophy:

- We believe that equity in education exists when all students are provided learning experiences matched to their abilities, needs and interests.
- We believe that exceptional gifts and talents can be in the areas of academics, the arts, kinesthetic abilities, leadership, creativity and problem solving.
- We believe that exceptional gifts and talents can be found in all cultures and in students with disabilities.
- We believe high ability learners are a part of the student body and HALs programming will work with the district's mission statement and beliefs.
- We believe that gifted education enhances educational opportunities provided in all classrooms to all students.

Definition of a High Ability Learner:
A 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 accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs in order to develop those capabilities.

Goals and Objectives:
The Goal of the Mitchell Public Schools High Ability Learner Program is to provide experiences that develop

1. Critical Thinking and ingenuity
2. Confidence
3. Knowledge
4. Habits of learning and problem solving
5. Communication and teamwork
6. Grit and perseverance

Identification Procedures:

Students can qualify for the HAL program by scoring in the 95th percentile in one or more subject areas of the Northwest Evaluation Association - NWEA assessments for two consecutive tests (Fall & Spring) or by teacher recommendation. Students who qualify may enter the program at the beginning of the following semester. Students must have parental permission in order to enroll or drop from the HALs program. Students must meet the following standards in order to maintain their HALs eligibility:

- Students must keep their core class average at or above 78%. Students must not fail a course for the semester.
- Students must attend HALs' classes and meetings on a consistent basis.
- Once a student is dropped from HALs, the student must meet the requirements during the immediately preceding semester in order to re-enroll.
- HAL students are expected to be behavioral and academic role models for others

Description of Services/Programming:

- Grades 3-6: Students are offered after-school programming focused on special interests and educational/intellectual challenge. This programming is offered weekly and is optional for students to attend.
- Grades 7-12: Students may choose to take a course focused on high ability learning and opportunity. This class uses a variety of teaching strategies, including, but not limited to: curriculum acceleration, enrichment, project-based learning, and/or competition.
- Additional programming available for HAL students (but not limited exclusively to HAL students): Chess Club, Computer Club, Math Counts, Quiz Bowl, IXL enrichment

Differentiated curriculum:

a. Curriculum acceleration
b. Curriculum enrichment
c. Compacting curriculum
d. Student Grouping
e. Mentoring/Shadowing
f. Affective Curriculum
i. Specialized Counseling

Program evaluation process:

a. Self-evaluation and/or self-assessment

b. Perception survey data

Staff Development and Support:

Staff attend the Nebraska Association for the Gifted conference on an annual basis.

Program Management Outline:

a. Personnel Roles
    i. Special services director- oversees programming, planning, and identification
    ii. Elementary HAL teacher- oversees scheduling, parent communication, planning and instruction
    iii. Secondary HAL teacher- oversees scheduling, parent communication, planning and instruction
b. Communication with students' parents
    i. Identification letters are sent to parents annually in the fall.
    ii. Weekly communication is delivered to parents through Remind at the Elementary level
c. Communication with students' teachers
    i. Teachers are notified of student qualification and group activities on a regular basis.

Budget Planning/Allocation of Resources:

1. Salaries
2. Materials and programming
3. Curriculum
4. Professional Development

Future Plans/Improvement Goals:

Continue to focus on providing enhanced learning opportunities within traditional classrooms for all students, including HAL students. Focused attention on training in differentiation for teaching and administrative staff.