

Mead Public School
High Ability Learner Identification and Plan
2026-27

MISSION

The Mead Public Schools, families, and community shall provide learning opportunities that challenge and encourage all learners.

High Ability Learner Team:

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Philosophy

The Mead Public Schools Board of Education and the staff of Mead Public Schools recognizes that the student population includes students with exceptional abilities. The District is committed to providing a program to meet these needs.

The purpose of the High Ability Learner Program is to provide opportunities to students so that they can broaden and extend their learning process and enhance their social responsibility. Therefore, the District encourages the support to be integrated with the regular school program to increase opportunities.

The district will use a multi-tiered support system (MTSS) which is a comprehensive framework designed to identify and support students with varying learning needs, including high-ability learners. The focus of this plan is to implement an MTSS that effectively identifies high-ability learners within the school system, ensuring they receive appropriate educational opportunities and support. This system will help ensure that all students, regardless of learning needs, race, creed, national origins, genders, physical abilities, and economic status, receive the appropriate level of challenge and support to reach their full potential.

Definition - State of Nebraska -LB 647 contains the following definition of a learner with high ability: Learner with high ability means a student that performs, or has the capacity to perform, at greater levels in one or more domains of instruction in comparison to individuals of the same age, educational experience, or environment and who requires accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs in order to develop those abilities fully. [(Sec 79-1107(3))]

Goals and Objectives: The goal of the HAL program is to provide a differentiated program that will meet the needs of our districts' high ability learners. The program will:

- Evaluate the high ability program goals, activities, materials, and procedures.
- Follow the MTSS identification procedures as outlined in the district identification plan for high ability learners and make all staff members aware of the identification procedures.
- Use a tiered system of support to meet the needs of all learners including high ability learners.
- Provide professional development opportunities to staff to promote a better understanding of the needs of high ability learners, and the services available to meet those needs

MTSS for IDENTIFICATION

Tier 1: Universal Screening and Core Program

- Create a strong core program in all subject areas that differentiates instruction for all students showing advanced knowledge and skills.
- Identify *potential* high ability learners within the general population using established, quality assessments:

Assessment Tools:

- Achievement Tests
- Grade-level Assessments
 - [Screening Assessments and data sources may include, but are not limited to: MAP Assessments (Measures of Academic Progress), NSCAS (Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System), ACT, ELPA21, portfolios]

Frequency:

- Conduct regular screenings at the beginning of the academic year and after major transitions (e.g., from elementary to middle school) to ensure ongoing identification of *potential* high ability learners.
- Review and update screening methods periodically.

Data Collection:

- Maintain a database of assessment results.
- Monitor trends and patterns in screening data.
- Learners with *potential* high ability will be screened using data such as high achievement scores and portfolios.

Interventions:

- Offer professional development for teachers to better recognize high ability traits and behaviors.

Strategies:

- Provide more challenging content / Learning Centers
- Accelerate core instruction / Flexible pacing
- Flexible grouping of students
- Differentiated instruction of content, process, product

Tier 2: Targeted Assessment and Observation

Gather more comprehensive data for possible identification.

Assessment Tools:

- Administer in-depth cognitive assessments such as the CogAT or similar assessment to potential high ability learners.
- Conduct portfolio assessments.
- Include teacher and parent input through rating scales, checklists, rubrics, etc.

Frequency:

- Administer targeted assessments as needed.
- Regularly review data from Tier 1 and identify students for Tier 2 assessment.

Data Collection:

- Maintain a portfolio of student work and assessment results.
- Utilize multiple sources of data to possibly confirm high-ability status.

Interventions:

- Implement differentiated instruction in the classroom to challenge students.
- Offer advanced coursework and/or extracurricular programs.

Strategies:

- Offer advanced coursework, enrichment opportunities, and accelerated learning options within the regular classroom setting (curriculum compacting, contracts)
- Offer specialized programs, such as honors classes, advanced placement, dual credit classes to cater to the unique needs of potential high ability learners.
- Provide access to extracurricular activities and competitions, programs that align with student's interests, talents and abilities.

Tier 3: Intensive Support

Confirm the high-ability status of students identified in Tier 2. Provide specialized support and enrichment opportunities for high ability learners and ensure their continuous growth and development.

Assessment Tools:

- Continue to assess progress through ongoing assessments and possibly
- specialized assessments.
- Use achievement tests, project-based assessments, and performance evaluations.

Frequency:

- Regularly assess and adjust interventions based on student progress.

Data Collection:

- Maintain ongoing records of student achievement and growth.
- Monitor the effectiveness of Tier 3 interventions.

Interventions:

- Offer entrance to gifted and talented programs
- Provide enrichment opportunities for students identified as high ability learners.
- Develop individualized learning plans that outline appropriate instructional strategies, goals, and interventions based on assessment results.
- Offer mentorship programs with experts in specific fields.
- Provide access to advanced coursework, dual enrollment, acceleration options, whole-grade skipping, early admission to college, etc.
- Encourage participation in research projects and competitions.

Continuum of services, options, and strategies

Differentiated Curriculum	Alternative Assignments
Curriculum Compacting	Contract Learning
Curriculum Acceleration	Learning Centers
Curriculum Enrichment	Before and After School Enrichment
Flexible Student Grouping	Field Trips
Compacting Curriculum	Whole Class or Whole School Enrichment
Advanced Placement	Community Sponsored Programs
Advanced Elective Classes	Competitions
Independent Study	Career Counseling, Exploration and Guidance
Dual Enrollment	Social and Emotional Counseling
Cluster Grouping	Extra-Curricular School Offerings
Mentorships/Shadowing	Pull-Out and/or Push-In

Program Evaluation and Future Planning

Annual evaluations of the HAL MTSS program shall be conducted by the District's MTSS team using District data. This information may come from, but is not limited to, assessments, students, parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and community members. Students will

be continually asked to evaluate learning opportunities and activities. Information gathered will be used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the HAL MTSS program. Student needs, program design, curriculum, learning environment, student identification, staff development, and other resources will be evaluated. Using information gathered from the evaluation process, adjustments will be made to improve services in the future.

The HAL MTSS team will conduct regular meetings to review screening and assessment data, discuss student progress, and adjust interventions accordingly.

Provide Staff Development

Ongoing training and support for teachers will be provided to effectively identify, nurture, challenge, understand the needs of, and understand the services provided to high-ability learners within the classroom. Teachers will be informed of the students identified as high ability learners.

All staff will be made aware of the district-wide plan for learners with high ability, have an understanding of the characteristics of such students, be able to design and implement classroom experiences which utilize differentiation of curriculum and instruction, and be able to assess the work and progress of learners of high ability. Contingent upon local, state, or federal funding, money shall be allotted to provide for materials and activities relating to program development and implementation, as well as for support services and professional development to allow for successful completion of district goals.

Appeal

An appeal of a non-identification decision by the District-wide High Ability Learner Team can be presented for consideration at any time. A written request for appeal should be sent to the High Ability Learner Coordinator. The coordinator will then contact the HAL Team regarding a reconsideration meeting.

Exit Policy:

Written approval shall be received from the student, parent, and teacher, with a written narration of the reason(s) for exiting the high ability learner program. Students shall be dismissed from the high ability program if they refused to attend class, routinely do not complete assignments, and voice dissatisfaction with the gifted program. The school counselor, and principal will be informed before such measures occur, and the high ability coordinator, guidance counselor, and principal will meet with the student to discuss reasons for dropping out of the program. Contact in regards to these matters will be made with legal guardians or parents.

Program Management Outline

The high ability learner program shall be under the leadership of the high ability learner coordinator, principal, and school superintendent. These individuals will direct the services for the education of the gifted and complete the budget planning.

A listing of students who meet the district criteria for learners of high ability and the areas of high capability of each of those students will be made available to classroom teachers by the school district administration by September 30th of each year to further test or begin services for the year.

By September 30th of each school year, the school district administration shall make available to parent or guardians of identified learners with high ability, information about how their child has been identified.

Implementing a multi-tiered support system for identifying high-ability learners is essential to ensure that these students receive the appropriate educational opportunities and support they need to reach their full potential. This plan outlines a systematic approach to identification and intervention, fostering a learning environment that maximizes the development of high ability students while meeting their unique educational needs.

SEE MTSS TEAM FOR CURRENT DECISION RULES

Students who have a score at the 75th percentile or higher on the Fall Reading and Math MAP test and/or the Spring Reading and Math MAP test will automatically move to Tier 2.

Students who score at the 95th percentile or higher on the CogAT or similar assessment will automatically move to Tier 3.