INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

HIGH ABILITY PROGRAMMING

HIGH ABILITY EDUCATION

BARTHOLOMEW CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION

COLUMBUS, INDIANA
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DEFINITION OF HIGH ABILITY STUDENTS

Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation abides by the Indiana Code’s definition of a high ability student.

The Indiana Code defines a student with high abilities as one who:

► 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:

► Is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests (IC 20-36-1-3).

BARTHOLOMEW CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION HIGH ABILITY PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

The following pages will describe each of the high ability programming options offered by the elementary and/or middle schools in Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation.

High Ability Program (self-contained)

Cluster and Flexible Grouping

Multi-Age Classrooms
The High Ability Program (formerly known as the Academic Challenge Program) is one service option that Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation offers to students that have been identified as having high abilities.

This full-time, self-contained program includes:

► Grades 4-6
► Two elementary sites
  ▶ Parkside
  ▶ Southside

► Grades 7-8
► Two middle school sites
  ▶ Central
  ▶ Northside

► Indiana Standards base
► Compacted core curriculum
► Appropriate pacing
► Emphasis on research skills, critical and creative thinking, and leadership
► Differentiated content, process, and products
► Math and Language Arts
  ▶ Use above-grade level materials
► Science and Social Studies
  ▶ Use on-grade level text resources
  ▶ Incorporate differentiation within the instruction and projects by using above-grade level materials
► Class size as determined by BCSC policy
Cluster and Flexible Grouping

Cluster grouping is another option that BCSC offers to its elementary high ability students. Through cluster grouping, the range of student abilities in each classroom is narrowed, allowing for each student to receive the most appropriate instruction in each subject. Flexible grouping in the classroom is comprised of a combination of whole group, small group, and independent work. Through flexible grouping, student achievement is maximized. A student that is identified as high ability and chooses to remain at his/her home school or a student that is identified as a high ability math or high ability language arts learner will be served through these instructional grouping strategies and differentiation of the class curriculum.

Multi-Age Classrooms

Multi-age classrooms are distinct in that they allow two or more grade levels to work together with a teacher in one classroom. The format of the multi-age classroom allows for students to interact with classmates of different ages and build relationships with peers and teachers for more than one year. Multi-age classrooms also provide an environment in which each student is able to naturally develop. Opportunities exist for each child to interact with children of varying backgrounds, abilities, interests, personalities, and ages.

Each of the eleven elementary schools in BCSC is unique in size and structure. One or more of the aforementioned high ability programming options is taking place in each building. To get the best idea of what options and services will be available to your child at his/her home school, please contact the building principal or your child’s classroom teacher.
IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

The identification process is multi-step. It starts with corporation-wide testing of all 3rd and 6th grade students. Test scores, along with data and student portfolio information (detailed on the next page), are presented to the Identification Committee. The committee identifies and finalizes the list of students for high ability services. Students who demonstrate high ability in multiple areas are identified as General Intellectual and are invited to participate in a self-contained high ability classroom at Parkside Elementary, Southside Elementary, Central Middle School or Northside Middle School. Students who demonstrate high ability in one subject (math or language arts) can be identified as a high ability math learner or a high ability language arts learner. Students with high abilities in a specific subject area will be served at their home schools through cluster or flexible grouping and/or multi-age classrooms.

The elementary and middle school Identification Committee includes representation from multiple schools and is comprised of:

► Administrators
► Current high ability and general education teachers
► A representative from special student services, including ELL and/or

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

All 3rd and 6th grade students in the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation are tested for high ability services at their home school in October/November. Students currently in the 4th, 5th or 7th grade, who are interested in high ability programming consideration, can attend an opening testing date in January or June. Check the website or contact the High Ability Coordinator for specific dates and times.

ALL students will be reevaluated in 6th grade to be considered for middle school services.
DATA REVIEWED IN THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Cognitive Abilities Test
► Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal batteries are given to assess general thinking and problem-solving skills

Iowa Test of Basic Skills
► Achievement tests—math and reading skills

Student Portfolio
► Writing Prompt
► Open ended math problem
► STAR reading level

Confidential Teacher Rating Scale
► Completed by student’s teacher

PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND STUDENTS NEW TO BCSC

Parents/guardians who have a student that attends a private school and those new to BCSC will need to provide additional information for evaluation. They will also need to attend an open testing date in January or June to complete the battery of high ability tests. Please contact the High Ability Coordinator with questions about this process.

Additional information may include:
► Student work for the portfolio
► Writing prompt (topic available from the High Ability Coordinator)
► Teacher Rating Scale
► Information for contacting the child’s previously attended school
DURING AND AFTER IDENTIFICATION

Parents/guardians will be notified of decisions, via mail, after high ability testing is completed and the Identification Committee has met.

Letters concerning high ability testing are sent out in mid-March and will notify parents/guardians if their student has been identified for high ability services.

Teachers, parents, and staff at the student’s home school are not informed of which students are being offered an invitation to the program prior to letters being sent out. Please contact the High Ability Department with any questions.

ACCEPTANCE AND PLACEMENT

Parents/guardians of students invited to the elementary and middle school High Ability Programs are requested to confirm or decline participation by mid-April. There is an informational meeting in April to help parents better understand the expectations of the program before this decision is made. After each family has accepted or declined, class lists are then set, and the students’ home schools are notified of those who will be transferring.

Acceptance for the elementary program is for grades 4-6. Retesting is not necessary until entry into the middle school program. Acceptance for the middle school program is for grades 7-8.

Parents/guardians of students selected for the High Ability Program are given an opportunity to indicate which site they would prefer on the acceptance form. If a student already attends a high ability site school, every effort is made to keep a student in his/her home district. Consideration is given to the site preference; however, due to BCSC class size policy, there are times in which these requests cannot be honored.
There is no “trial” period for the High Ability Program. An elementary student admitted to the program is able to attend through the 6th grade based on his/her performance. If it is determined that the self-contained program is not the right environment for a student, the exit procedure will be followed and the student may be enrolled in other high ability services. In 6th grade each student will be reevaluated for middle school high ability services.

Once a student “exits” the elementary program, he/she cannot reenter the program until middle school (upon acceptance.)

**TRANSPORTATION**

If bus transportation is required, arrangements may be made through the Transportation Department. Some options include:

► Providing own transportation
► Letting student ride the secondary bus from home to one of the high school transfer points and then riding the elementary bus
► Dropping off at a transfer point, i.e. East or North High School, and then riding the elementary bus
GENERAL SCHEDULE

October/November—High ability testing takes place at each elementary school in BCSC (all 3rd and 6th graders are tested)

January—Open testing dates for move-in students, non-BCSC students, and BCSC 4th, 5th and 7th graders.

February—Student information, teacher rating scales and portfolios are compiled

Late February—Identification Committee meets

Mid-March—Letters are sent to all parents/guardians of BCSC 3rd and 6th grade students, as well as open testers informing them of Identification Committee decisions and informational meetings

April—High ability informational meeting for students and parents/guardians

Mid-April—Decision to accept or decline placement and appeal requests are due; Appeals Committee meets to reevaluate student portfolios

End of April—Final decisions on appeals are mailed

For the latest high ability updates, including testing dates and meeting times/locations, please check out the High Ability section of the BCSC website.
HIGH ABILITY
CONTACT
INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding high ability services for Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, please contact one of the following personnel:

SHELLEY WALKER, HIGH ABILITY COORDINATOR
WALKERR@BCSC.K12.IN.US

LAURA HACK, DIRECTOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
HACKL@BCSC.K12.IN.US

You can also find out more information about high ability services, testing dates, and more on the BCSC homepage.

http://www.bcsc.k12.in.us

Click on the Parents tab at the top, and then click on High Ability.