

Sterling Public Schools

High Ability Learner Program

Revised 2024

Nebraska, Rule 3 Definition

“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 fully.”

HAL Philosophy

Sterling Public Schools recognizes that each student is unique. We strive to provide high-quality instruction to all students and also take into account their individual needs.

The purpose of the High Ability Learner program is to provide an inclusive environment and create opportunities for students to develop talents in their domain of strength while focusing on the specific affective, social, and academic needs of gifted and talented students.

The High Ability Learner program is designed to identify students in grades K-12 who exhibit high performance capabilities and foster talent in students that display potential. Appropriate services shall be provided to these students.

Definition of High Ability Learner

Examples schools uses an inclusive definition of “High Ability Learner” in an attempt to include as many students as possible, and is based on the Case for Excellence (1993) and ESEA (2001). The definition is as follows:

“High Ability Learners are children who perform or show potential to perform in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment.”

Vision:

All Sterling Public Schools High Ability Learners will achieve their full potential through opportunities to excel in area(s) of strength.

HAL Program Goals & Objectives

The goal of the HAL program is to identify high-ability learners, their unique needs, and ways to support their growth in specific talents and strengths. We also aim to provide advanced learning opportunities and enrichment for all students. Toward this end we will follow the identification procedures as outlined in the district identification plan for high ability learners. All staff members shall be made aware of the identification procedures.

- To meet the students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional needs.
 - Within the regular classroom a variety of instructional techniques including but not limited to alternative assignments, challenging coursework, contract learning, differentiated curriculum, and independent studies will be used as necessary.
 - Within the regular classroom flexible grouping, including but not limited to ability, achievement, cluster, and cross-age grouping will be provided as necessary.
 - Enrichment programs will include but are not limited to within-class enrichment, whole class enrichment, after school enrichment, field trips, school-wide enrichment, extracurricular programs, community sponsored programs, and pull-out services.
 - The counselor will be available to assist teachers and students in meeting individual needs.
 - To evaluate student program option choices on an individual basis at the discretion of the classroom teacher in conjunction with the HAL coordinator.

HAL Identification Procedures

The districts' identification process shall include multiple criteria in an effort to be inclusive rather than exclusive in the HAL program. Target (achievement data, IQ testing, etc.) and non-target (observations, portfolios, work samples, etc.) instruments shall be used for identification. The identification procedures will be consistent with the definition of the districts' high ability learner program, and shall measure diverse abilities.

HAL Screening Process:

Identification: HAL Students qualify based on an assessment of the following data:

1. 5th-8th Grade NSCAS
 - a. 85- 89th percentile = 1 point each for ELA, math, and science
 - b. 90- 94th percentile = 2 points each for ELA, math, and science
 - c. 95- 100th percentile = 3 points each for ELA, math, and science
2. FastBridge District Test Data:
 1. 85- 89th percentile = 1 point each for math, language arts, reading, and science
 2. 90- 94th percentile = 2 points each for math, language arts, reading, and science
 3. 95- 100th percentile = 3 points each for math, language arts, reading, and science
3. ACT Data Prior to Junior Year:
 1. 24-26 Composite Score = 1 point
 2. 27-29 Composite Score = 2 points
 3. 30 and above = 3 points
4. HAL Teacher Nominations. Teacher Input Form: Modified SRBCSS (Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students)

Final Placement: The HAL Team (1 high school teacher, 1 elementary teacher, guidance counselor, and administrator) reviews the data above and students qualify by receiving 10 points total or by teacher nomination.

Notification:

Parents, guardians, or other persons exercising legal or actual charge or control over a child, and teachers shall be notified as to those students who have been identified as a high ability student.

Exit Policy:

Students shall be dismissed from the high ability program if they refuse to attend class, routinely do not complete assignments, and voice dissatisfaction with the HAL 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. Contact in regards to these matters will be made with legal guardians or parents.

Additional Program Services, Options, and Strategies (including but not limited to)

- Curriculum Enrichment
- Flexible Grouping
- Advanced Elective Classes
- Independent Study Opportunities
- Dual Enrollment through SCC
- Cluster Grouping
- Mentorships/Shadowing
- Extra-Curricular School Offerings
- Counseling & Guidance
- Career Exploration
- Pull-Out

Staff Development

School staff shall receive training which will include, but is not limited to areas such as HAL characteristics, social and emotional needs, identification, curriculum, assessment techniques and instructional strategies.

Teachers will be encouraged to attend seminars and conferences related to high ability learning (i.e. Nebraska Association for Gifted conference, ESU workshops, Webinars, etc.).

Teachers, counselors, and administrators will be made aware annually, which students have been identified and are included in the program.

Management Plan

The High Ability Learning program will be led by Mrs. Matkins, the director of HAL Services. Mrs. Matkins will ensure the quality of training and implementation within our school. She will work with staff, parents, and administration collaboratively to build relationships and create a positive environment to foster the needs of High Ability Learners. The program will be evaluated annually by the team to respond to student needs and identified areas of growth through reflective practice.