



**ELEMENTARY
HIGH ABILITY FAMILY
HANDBOOK
2019-2020**

HIGH ABILITY STAFF 2018-2019

Program Coordinator Mandy Fisher Edgelea Elementary (765)772-4780

Program Assistant Diana Cavanaugh Hiatt (765) 771-6036

Building Coordinators

Jeff High School
Laurie Rinehart
(765) 772-4700

Tecumseh Junior High School
Jenna Rosenberry
(765) 772-4750

Sunnyside Intermediate School
Emily Nolan
(765) 771-6100

Edgelea Elementary
Mandy Fisher
(765)772-4780

Edgelea High Ability Teachers

Kindergarten - Ms. Angela Houston

Grade One - Mrs. Maribel Masoodi

Grade Two - Mrs. Kelly Jacobs

Grade Three- Mr. Ryan Cole

Grade Four - Mrs. Amy Freeman

Introduction

“Our highest responsibility, finally, unavoidably, is the stewardship of our potential---being all we can be.”

Marilyn Ferguson

The Lafayette School Corporation has a commendable record in its support of high ability education. It recognizes and appreciates the special talents of all young people and is dedicated to providing appropriate environments to nurture their talents. In 1986-87, LSC began providing self-contained classes for elementary students in grades 2-4 who were achieving one to two grade levels above their peers academically. The belief was and is that these children’s needs could best be met in a classroom with a specially trained teacher. Students in grade one who demonstrate potential are “clustered” with peers with a special first grade teacher. Students in grades 5-12 have been provided a variety of Excel, Challenge, and Honors course options and extra-curricular activities to enable them to develop their academic, artistic, musical, physical, and leadership talents. Beginning in 2008 high ability kindergarten students were placed in a full day program with enriched math and language arts experiences.

Edgelea Elementary School is the site for the magnet K-4 High Ability Program. Kindergarten students are identified as having academic potential and are placed with a trained kindergarten teacher for an advanced and enriched kindergarten program. First grade students showing a great deal of academic potential are clustered in a first grade classroom with a trained teacher. Identified High Ability students in grades two through four either participate in a self-contained classroom with other identified students with a trained teacher. Beginning in 2017-2018, students that have been identified as high ability may be placed in a self-contained high ability classroom at Edgelea or they may be clustered in a heterogeneous classroom receiving differentiated instruction with a trained teacher. Those identified High Ability students in grades one through four and are clustered in a heterogeneous classroom may opt to stay at their home/neighbourhood school to receive High Ability services.

The continuing success of the High Ability Program can be attributed to the hard work and collaborative efforts of teachers, students, administrators, parents, school board members, and the community. Curriculum and instructional activities within High Ability classrooms are accelerated at least one year, enriched, and differentiated with research and independent study as integral parts of each grade level’s program. An effort is made to integrate technology into the curriculum and authentic assessment techniques are also important program components.

Program Goals

The Goals for the Lafayette School Corporation’s High Ability Program are:

1. High ability students will pursue challenging, differentiated curriculum that will allow them to become independent learners.
2. High ability students will discover and understand their own uniqueness and will display positive self-concepts as they pursue their individual interests and needs, and develop innovative products.
3. High ability students will understand divergent views and respect individual’s viewpoints as they cooperatively and responsibly interact with their communities.
4. High ability students will utilize higher level thinking skills and meta-cognitive processes in their pursuit of mastering advanced content.
5. High ability students will display a multi-cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity within a global perspective.

HOMEWORK PHILOSOPHY

Homework is an expected part of the High Ability Program. It is expected that students will do the work independently with little or no parent intervention. Each grade level in the High Ability Program has a consistent homework routine and an expectation policy in place. Practice and reinforcement at home of skills learned in school provides a beneficial connection for the High Ability student. Each student is given an assignment notebook to write down homework assignments each day. Here are some specific guidelines:

- Homework helps each child learn study skills and organization and how to become a more independent learner.
- Each teacher has a policy in place for late or missed assignments.
- Please check with the teacher and become familiar with his/her expectations.
- In Kindergarten, first and second grades, teachers and parents help more with organization and responsibility so students can learn to be consistent with turning in assignments.
- By third and fourth grades, the teachers expect the children to be more independent and become responsible for all of their work, for example: filling out their own assignment notebooks, completing assigned work and turning it in on time and packing their own backpacks at home and at school each day.
- The amount of time spent on homework varies by grade level, night, and the child. Here are some guidelines:
 - Grades K & 1 = 15-20 minutes
 - Grades 2 & 3 =20-45 minutes
 - Grade 4 = 45 minutes
- If your child is **CONSISTENTLY** spending longer each evening than the teacher expects, please let the teacher know.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. ARE YOU SURE MY CHILD BELONGS IN A HIGH ABILITY PROGRAM?

Your child was carefully identified for the High Ability Program based on standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, parent recommendations, checklists, and assessments given by the High Ability Program. Students are tested in grades K, 2, 4, and 6 for the following school year to determine placement. We continually look at students throughout the school year. We use several ability and achievement tests to help with the placement. A committee meets to review data to determine placement. We feel that this program is well-suited to your child's needs. Relax and allow your child time to adjust to new surroundings. If after the first grading period you still have concerns, please express these to your child's High Ability teacher.

2. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS OPTIONS?

Some students will be in the high ability program at Edgelea Elementary School. Edgelea is our magnet school for the program. Students can be in Language Arts and/or Math. We will also have cluster high ability classes. These classes will be at each individual student's home school. There are designated high ability teachers at each elementary school in each

grade level. Again, students can be in Language Arts and/or Math in the cluster high ability classes. Finally, students can also be placed in the general education classrooms.

3. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO EACH OF THE OPTIONS?

The options cater to the student's academic needs by differentiating instruction to meet and challenge the academic ability of each student. Those in the magnet program will be in a self-contained classroom with other high ability students who tested at a similar percentile. This will provide an environment where students will challenge one another through collaboration and cooperative learning. The clustering model will place in students in a general education classroom with other identified high ability students and will receive enriched and differentiated programming within that classroom that will meet their needs to promote academic growth.

4. CAN I REQUEST A DIFFERENT OPTION FOR MY CHILD? IF SO, HOW?

If your child does qualify for the Edgelea magnet program or the elementary level cluster group, you will be informed. There will be an enrollment form for parents to fill out which gives permission for the enrollment. If you do not wish for your child to be in either the magnet or the cluster program, please indicate this on the enrollment form. If your child did qualify for the magnet program at Edgelea but you wish to keep your child at his/her home school in the cluster program, this is also an option.

4. MY CHILD IS NEW TO THE PROGRAM AND MISSES HIS/HER OLD FRIENDS AND/OR SCHOOL?

Encourage your child to play with neighborhood friends, participate in scouts, athletic activities, etc. with his/her old friends while developing new friends in his/her current class.

5. YOUR CHILD SAYS, "I'M NOT THE BEST (FASTEST, SMARTEST, ETC.) ANYMORE."

Please remind your child that everyone has strengths and weaknesses and in varying degrees. We are all different and that is okay! This new learning environment provides a special situation where students with many talents and abilities are grouped together to learn, grow, and share.

6. HOW DO I HANDLE MY CHILD'S FIRST LOW SCORE OR GRADE?

Remind your child that everyone makes mistakes, and we learn a great deal from our mistakes. Grades are not a reflection of him/her personally but a method to show how well he/she is performing. Help them keep it in perspective. Remind them to ask for help if they need it.

7. MY CHILD HAD AN ASSIGNMENT LAST NIGHT THAT HE/SHE HAD NO IDEA HOW TO DO, AND IT SEEMED TOO DIFFICULT?

Homework is a direct extension of classroom instruction. Frequently, the assignment was started in class and a process for completing the assignment was taught and discussed. Ask

your child to explain the process. If after a reasonable amount of time your child is still unable to complete the assignment, please send the teacher a note.

8. HOW MUCH HELP SHOULD WE GIVE ON PROJECTS AND ASSIGNMENTS?

Assignments are designed for the children. Parents may provide guidance and explanations. Organization and time management need constant reinforcement from parents.

9. HOW CAN I HELP AT SCHOOL?

We welcome your help at school! You can visit anytime. Please let the teacher and the school know you are coming so when you arrive the children are in the classroom and not in a special class, attending a special event or testing. Please make sure you sign in at the office and have a background check on file. Talk with your child's teacher about specific opportunities to help in the classroom.

10. HOW DOES MY CHILD'S CLASS AND THE REGULAR CLASSROOMS INTERACT?

All grade level children have recess and lunch together each day. We often take grade level field trips and work together on special projects.

11. WILL MY CHILD AUTOMATICALLY CONTINUE IN THE PROGRAM NEXT YEAR?

Evaluation is an on-going process. The corporation continually looks at students in every grade level from year to year. We ask for teacher recommendations as well as parent recommendations. We do an cognitive ability test with all K, 2nd, 4th, and 6th grade students. Students in grades K-6 will take the NWEA throughout the year. This is an achievement test that will also help with placement. Provided your child has a successful year, there is no cause for concern. **High Ability students are expected to maintain a "B" average throughout the year.** Your child's teacher will contact you if she/he has specific concerns. A nine-week intervention plan may be put in place if your student requires additional support. Placement reassignment for a student is a case by case determination.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

1. **The High Ability Program Office at Edgelea Elementary School**

2910 South 18th Street
Lafayette, Indiana 47909

There is a supply of books for parents of gifted children on such topics as perfectionism, parenting tips, counselling needs, etc.
Call Mandy Fisher (765)772-4780 or Diana Cavanaugh for more information (765)771-6036.

2. **The Indiana Association of the Gifted**

www.iag-online.org

A group of parents and educators state-wide who advocate for gifted and talented children. A newsletter entitled *Images* is produced four times each year and a state-wide conference for teachers and parents is held each March or April in Indianapolis.

3. **The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC)**

1707 L Street, NW, Suite 550
Washington DC 20036
(202)785-4268
www.nagc.org

A national group of educators, parents, and university personnel dedicated to improving educational opportunities for the nation's gifted and talented youth. This organization sponsors a yearly national conference and two publications: *Gifted Child Quarterly* and *Parenting for Potential*.

4. **The Gifted Education Resource Institute**

Purdue University
1446 Liberal Arts and Education Building
West Lafayette, IN 47907
(765) 494-7236

GERI provides summer programs and Super Saturday programs. You can contact Dr. Marcia Gentry, the Director of GERI for additional information.

5. **Hoagies' Gifted Education Page**

www.hoagiesgifted.org

Welcome to **Hoagies' Gifted Education Page**, the all-things-gifted site, full of resources, articles, books and links to help and support parents, teachers, and gifted children alike. Pick your entrance, but explore them all!