

HIGH ABILITY PROGRAM MANUAL

**RENSSELAER CENTRAL
SCHOOLS CORPORATION**



R E A C H

Rensselaer Enriched Accelerated Curriculum for High Ability

BELIEVE ● ACHIEVE ● SUCCEED

Revised 2024

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

The information provided in this handbook describes the REACH Program (Rensselaer Enriched Accelerated Curriculum for High Ability) which is the high ability academic programming, selection criteria, and procedures offered in the Rensselaer Central Schools Corporation. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a resource to parents and staff for use in understanding the corporation's procedures and program offerings for high ability students.

CORPORATION OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

The mission of the Rensselaer Central Schools Corporation is to provide an appropriate educational program and learning environment which will effectively meet the educational needs of its students and citizens and help its students accomplish educational goals which are significant, durable and transferable.

Definition of a High Ability Student

According to Indiana Code 20-36-1-3, a high ability student means a student who:

- (1) performs at or shows the potential for performing at an outstanding level of accomplishment in at least one (1) domain when compared with other students of the same age, experience, or environment; and
- (2) is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

High ability students are those whose academic needs may not be met adequately in the general education classroom setting and may benefit from specifically designed programs and services that may challenge, accelerate, and enrich the learning of current grade level curriculum.

DISTRICT GOALS FOR THE HIGH ABILITY PROGRAM

District Goals: Students

The goals for students in the high ability program offered by RCSC are as follows—

Students will:

1. master basic skills while partaking in differentiated curricula and/or instruction to accelerate and/or enrich their knowledge in specific academic areas,
2. think critically and creatively in complex and abstract situations,
3. develop advanced study skills through the application of independence, self-direction and self-evaluation,
4. analyze, evaluate and apply research to develop high quality original products,

5. increase their understanding and respect for individuals with varying ability levels through the development of communication skills and collaborative interactions with diverse people, and
6. develop an awareness and understanding of their own unique social-emotional needs

District Goals: Curriculum and Instruction

At the elementary level (K-5), students identified as high ability in either language arts, math or both may be placed in a classroom made up of a cluster of high ability students as well as students who are not identified as high ability. In this mixed ability class, students receive differentiated instruction throughout the school day, enrichment during grade level growth time and opportunities to participate in after-school enrichment clubs and academic teams.

At the middle school level (6-8), students can be identified as high ability in either language arts, math or both. Students may be placed in Advanced/Honors Language Art, Reading and/or Math courses. In eighth grade, students can be enrolled in Algebra I for high school credit. In addition, eighth graders can also take advanced offerings for high school credit, such as Biology I or Introduction to Agriculture. Academic-enrichment opportunities are available for in most academic areas as well as the arts.

At the high school level (9-12), students may enroll in courses that are appropriate for their abilities. Rensselaer Central High School offers a variety of Advanced Placement or Honors level courses, both of which are on a weighted grading scale. Students may be allowed opportunities to take coursework for dual enrollment and credits with those colleges or universities with which RCSC has agreements. Enrollment in such courses may be through self-selection or by teacher recommendation.

District Goals: Counseling and Guidance

The entire Rensselaer Central Schools Corporation's staff is committed to assisting students as they engage in challenging activities and experiences.

Students at the elementary level (K-5) are provided with support through teachers and/or school counselors. Using the cluster model for classroom placement, students are placed with like-ability peers with teachers who are aware of the social and emotional characteristics of high ability students. Additionally, students participate in social/emotional lessons in their classroom with their teachers on a daily basis. Individualized and small group support is also provided, upon request of the student,

family or teacher, by the school counselor with an emphasis on topics that impact high ability students.

School counselors at the secondary level (6-12) assist students in making course selections as well as with other academic issues. Upon request, the school counselors are available to meet with students, teachers and parents to answer questions and provide support for individual students. Middle school students (6-8) also participate in social/emotional lessons which focus on topics that impact high ability students.

District Goals: Professional Development

Professional development is available for all staff members, with a specific focus on those who interact regularly with high ability students. Training is accomplished in a variety of ways, including:

- collaboration on curriculum sequencing and instruction by elementary and secondary teachers,
- attendance at workshops targeting high ability programs, such as the Advanced Placement trainings, IDOE workshops, WVEC workshops and conference on differentiation and instructional strategies,
- attendance at conferences such as the Indiana Association of the Gifted State Conference and/or the National Association of the Gifted Conference,
- participation in peer observation and/or class visits by teachers, and
- other professional development opportunities as they become available each school year.

District Goals: Program Assessment

The corporation's Broad Based Planning Committee (BBPC) consists of the following stakeholders:

- Educators
- Administrators
- Counselors
- Students
- Parents
- Community Members

The BBPC meets at least twice a year and determines areas of focus, improvement and/or growth.

IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Identification is an on-going process. Placement of high ability students for high ability services does not automatically qualify him/her for services for each succeeding year.

Elementary (Grades K-5)

In Kindergarten, 2nd and 5th grade, the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) will be administered to all currently enrolled students. Students scoring at the 96th percentile or above on either the verbal, quantitative or the quantitative/nonverbal subtest will be evaluated for placement in the REACH program. Additional data to be reviewed for final placement includes: running record levels, report cards, ESGI, iREADY, Renzulli Scales and teacher input.

In grades 1, 3 and 4, the NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) Test will be administered to all currently enrolled students. Students scoring, twice in one school year, at the 98th percentile in grade 1 or the 96th percentile in grades 3 and 4 on either the Reading or Math subtest will be evaluated for placement in the REACH program. Additional data to be reviewed for final placement includes: running record levels, report cards, Renzulli Scales and teacher input.

Students in grades K-5 will be evaluated in the spring of each school year. School administrators and teachers will review the current achievement data for all students in each grade level. Final recommendations and identification for high ability services will be determined by this committee. Parents will be notified of identification in the fall of the subsequent school year.

Grade Level	Subject Area Qualifications
Kindergarten <i>A student must meet at least 2 qualifiers</i>	ELA CogAT Assessment: 96th percentile or higher on Verbal (V) portion Running Record--Level J Report Card Renzulli's Scales
	Math CogAT Assessment: 96th percentile or higher on Quantitative(Q) or Quantitative Nonverbal (QN) portion iReady (Above Grade Level) Report Card Renzulli's Scales
First <i>A student must meet at least 2 qualifiers</i>	ELA NWEA MAP Reading: 98th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year) Running Record--Level M Report Card (all standards rated a 4) Renzulli's Scales

	<p>Math NWEA MAP Math: 98th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year) iReady (Above Grade Level) Report Card (all standards rated a 4) Renzulli's Scales</p>
<p>Second <i>A student must meet at least 2 qualifiers</i></p>	<p>ELA CogAT Assessment: 96th percentile or higher on Verbal (V) portion NWEA MAP Reading: 96th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year) Running Record--Level Q Report Card (majority of standards rated a 4) Renzulli's Scales</p>
	<p>Math CogAT Assessment: 96th percentile or higher on Quantitative(Q) or Quantitative Nonverbal (QN) portion NWEA MAP Math: 96th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year) iReady (Above Grade Level) Report Card (majority of standards rated a 4) Renzulli's Scales</p>
<p>Third & Fourth <i>A student must meet at least 2 qualifiers</i></p>	<p>ELA NWEA MAP Reading: 96th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year) ILEARN ELA Proficiency Level--Above Proficiency Report Card Renzulli's Scales</p>
	<p>Math NWEA MAP Math: 96th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year) ILEARN Math Proficiency Level--Above Proficiency iReady (Above Grade Level) Report Card Renzulli's Scales</p>
<p>Fifth <i>A student must meet at least 2 qualifiers</i></p>	<p>ELA CogAT Assessment: 96th percentile or higher on Verbal (V) portion NWEA MAP Reading: 96th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year) ILEARN ELA Proficiency Level--Above Proficiency Report Card Renzulli's Scales</p>
	<p>Math CogAT Assessment: 96th percentile or higher on Quantitative(Q) or Quantitative Nonverbal (QN) portion NWEA MAP Math: 96th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year) ILEARN Math Proficiency Level--Above Proficiency iReady (Above Grade Level) Report Card Renzulli's Scales</p>

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Students identified as a high ability student will continue to receive services unless they are withdrawn through our exit procedures. The NWEA MAP Reading and Math Test

will be utilized to identify new students in grades 6-8. Students scoring, twice in one school year, at the 96th percentile on either the Reading or Math subtest will be evaluated for placement in the REACH program.

<p>Sixth, Seventh & Eighth</p> <p><i>A student must meet at least 2 qualifiers</i></p>	<p>ELA</p> <p>NWEA MAP Reading: 96th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year)</p> <p>ILEARN ELA Proficiency Level--Above Proficiency</p> <p>Report Card</p> <p>Renzulli's Scales</p>
	<p>Math</p> <p>NWEA MAP Math: 96th percentile or higher (minimum of 2 points in one year)</p> <p>ILEARN Math Proficiency Level--Above Proficiency</p> <p>Report Card</p> <p>Renzulli's Scales</p>

High School (Grades 9-12)

Students identified as a high ability student will continue to receive services unless they are withdrawn through our exit procedures. Student scores on PSAT and SAT will be reviewed each year and students who show potential will be identified and counseled into appropriate courses.

Process for Student New to the District

For students who move in to RCSC and wish to be considered for placement in the REACH program, the following steps must be taken:

1. The parent must first enroll the student in a Rensselaer Central Schools Corporation school and provide proof of residency.
2. The following information should be provided to the High Ability Coordinator.
 - a. Student's Name, Parent's Name and Phone Number
 - b. Name and Phone Number of previous school
 - c. Name of a teacher from previous school who can be reached for a recommendation
 - d. Standardized test scores for reading, language and math test (ILEARN, Stanford Achievement Test, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, etc.)
 - e. Ability score from a recognized test such as CogAT, Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Otis-Lennon Test of School Ability, WISC III or Stanford Binet
3. After a review of the information, the parents will be contacted if further testing is warranted.

APPEALS PROCESS

Parents may appeal the corporation's decision on the identification of their child by submitting a completed High Ability Appeal Form to the district High Ability Coordinator within the first 15 days of the school year. This form asks for specific information as to why a child should be reconsidered for selection.

An appeal does not re-evaluate student data already considered in the original identification process. Scoring at the Above Proficiency level on NWEA or !LEARN, high grades, or high performance on classroom benchmark assessments are not valid reasons for an appeal. The purpose of the appeal is to bring new information to the attention of the committee that could lead to a different decision. These may include alternate measures of ability and/or achievement.

The committee consisting of the coordinator, a principal and teachers who are licensed in high ability will convene to review the appeals and any additional information the parent submits and reach a decision about the most appropriate placement for the student. Parents will be notified in writing of the results of the appeal.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

If a student, parent or teacher believes participating in high ability services is no longer appropriate, they may request a conference with the principal, parents, teacher and student, if applicable. The participants will:

1. Discuss the areas of concern
2. Create a plan that includes realistic goals, supports, responsibilities and a timeline for review
3. Monitor the student's progress and communicate with parents as necessary
4. At the end of the agreed time period, no less than one grading period, reassess the situation and gather the original group for a review meeting. If the student has made progress, decide whether to continue with a new plan or let the student progress on his/her own. If little or no progress has been made, arrange for the student to exit the program.
5. If an exit from the program is deemed necessary, the parent will sign the permission form which will be placed in the student's file and a copy sent to the High Ability Coordinator.
6. Once a student has exited the program, s/he can only re-enter by making a request to the school principal. The request will be reviewed by the Appeal Committee. The committee may suggest testing to determine the best placement.

Parents may choose to withdraw their children from the REACH program at any time. The parent should contact the school principal to request a Parent Withdrawal Form. The completed form will be placed in the student's file and a copy sent to the High Ability Coordinator. Once exited in this manner, a student can only re-enter the program as described in #6 above.