

Exemplary Policy Statements

Sample #1: School Board Policy for High Ability Students*

The district shall provide services for high ability children at each school through site-based programs which are aligned with the district's mission statement, the goals of the program and the (*name of the district*) Board of Education policies.

I. Definition

“Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding capabilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society” (United States Office of Education).

II. Mission Statement

The program for high ability students in (*name of the district*) is designed for students whose intellectual capacity and aptitudes, rate of learning, and potential for creative contributions demand experiences apart from the regular curriculum. It provides diverse and appropriate learning experiences and environments which incorporate the academic, psychological, and social needs of the students. Students are provided educational alternatives throughout their years in the public system that teach, challenge and expand their knowledge while simultaneously stressing the development of an independent learner who can continuously question, apply and generate information. The (*name of the district*) Program is committed to the belief that every child possesses boundless potential, and to providing each identified child with guidance in discovering, developing and realizing his/her potential as an individual and as a member of society.

III. Goals

To attain this mission, the (*name of the district*) Program sets three goals with respect to educational programs for eligible students, and they are:

A. Appropriate Pacing

Appropriate pacing is defined as any provision that:

1. Places students at an appropriate instructional level, thereby creating the best possible match between the abilities of the student and the level of the instruction.
2. Allows students to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills, thereby providing continuous advancement and challenge.
3. Allows students to move beyond regular curriculum mastery into alternative activities and objectives.

* Source: Mansfield Public Schools, Mansfield, CT

Purcell, J. H. (1994). *The status of programs for high ability students* (CRS94306). University of Connecticut, The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. <https://nrcgt.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/953/2015/04/crs94306.pdf>

B. Enrichment

This aspect of the educational program is designed to meet the needs of all students, not just those eligible for program services. The enrichment component may include:

1. Exploratory activities to expose students in the school to a variety of subjects/topics beyond the traditional curriculum
2. Opportunities for self-selected projects
3. Extensions (e.g., mentorships) in various content areas

C. Affective Support

The progress of identified students will be monitored by the enrichment specialist. The person will coordinate services for identified students needing academic or personal counseling in areas such as underachievement, learning disabilities, or other social and emotional areas.

IV. Identification Procedures

A. Screening

Students will be screened in an ongoing fashion for academic ability through the administration of nationally standardized individual or group tests of intellectual ability. Students with a normed score at or above the 95th percentile will be identified for the program. The following additional criteria will also be used to identify high ability students and any of these criteria may result in placement in the program:

1. Standardized achievement tests at or above the 95th percentile in science, social studies, total math, total language, total reading, or the total composite score.
2. Evidence (e.g., performance, teacher recommendation) of the need for extensive curriculum modification in order to provide sufficient challenge.
3. Placement in academic, music, or visual arts contests and inclusion in selective performing groups.
4. Evidence of high ability or special talent outside curricular or talent areas (e.g., leadership).
5. Evidence of high levels of creativity.

Referrals for screening may be made by parents, teachers, students (self or peers) or professionals who are familiar with the student's abilities, potentials, and past records.

A special effort will be made to screen underrepresented populations such as minority students, those who are economically disadvantaged and those for whom English is a second language (ESL) students. These students may be placed even though they may not meet all of the above criteria.

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B. Placement

All students meeting the above criteria will be identified for program placement and will receive services through appropriate pacing, schoolwide enrichment, and affective support as described above.

V. Procedural safeguards insuring due process rights for those students who are identified for the program and those who are potential candidates for program services:

A. Parents and teachers may request the administration of an individual assessment for a student without recent ability test scores or for a student for whom a written test may be an inadequate measure of ability.

B. No test scores are released outside the school except to the parent or by the written request of the parent.

C. Recent standardized ability and achievement test scores provided by other school districts will be accepted in accordance with the identification procedures outlined above.

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Sample #2: School Board Policy for High Ability Students

All students who are exceptional are entitled to a public-supported education in which instruction is geared to their needs, interests and developmental level.

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Policy Statement on Ability Grouping

The practice of grouping, enabling students with advanced abilities and/or performance to be grouped together to receive appropriately challenging instruction, has recently come under attack. The National Association for Gifted Children wishes to reaffirm the importance of grouping for instruction of gifted students. Grouping allows for more appropriate, rapid, and advanced instruction, which matches the rapidly developing skills and capabilities of gifted students.

Special attention should be given to the identification of gifted and talented students who may not be identified through traditional assessment methods (including economically disadvantaged individuals, individuals of limited English proficiency, and individuals with handicaps), to help them participate effectively in special group programs.

Strong research evidence supports the effectiveness of ability grouping for gifted students in accelerated classes, enrichment programs, advanced placement programs, etc. Ability and performance grouping has been used extensively in programs for musically and artistically gifted students, and for athletically talented students with little argument. Grouping is a necessary component of every graduate and professional preparation program, such as law, medicine, and the sciences. It is an accepted practice that is used extensively in the education programs in almost every country in the western world.

NAGC does not endorse a tracking system that sorts all children into fixed layers in the school system with little attention to particular content, student motivation, past accomplishment, or present potential.

To abandon the proven instructional strategy of grouping students for instruction at a time of educational crisis in the U.S. will further damage our already poor competitive position to provide an appropriate education for all children.

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Policy Statement on Acceleration (approved 11/6/92)

The practice of educational acceleration has long been used to match appropriate learning opportunities with student abilities. The goals of acceleration are to adjust the pace of instruction to the student's capability, to provide an appropriate level of challenge, and to reduce the time period necessary for students to complete traditional schooling. When acceleration has been effective in achieving these goals, highly capable individuals are prepared to begin contributing to society at an earlier age. Although instructional adaptations, such as compacting, telescoping, and curriculum revision, which allow more economic use of time are desirable practices for

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exceptionally talented students, there are situations in which such modifications are insufficient in fulfilling the academic potential of all highly capable children. Personal acceleration is called for in these cases.

Personal acceleration involves moving a student through the traditional educational organization more quickly and includes such practices as grade skipping, concurrent enrollment in two grades, early entrance into kindergarten or college, credit by examination, combining three years of middle school into two, acceleration in particular content areas, and dual enrollment in high school or college. Students may be accelerated in one discipline or across disciplines.

Research documents the academic benefits and positive outcomes of personal acceleration for carefully selected students. Decisions about the appropriateness of personal acceleration and the extent of acceleration for a given student should include examination of student preferences and disposition relative to the decision, the student's intellectual and academic profile, and social readiness. Other factors which enhance the success of personal acceleration are positive attitudes of teachers, timeliness of the decision, parent support, and the careful monitoring of new placements with a clearly articulated option to return to the earlier setting without penalty.

Opportunities to learn must be offered to all children. Accordingly, highly able students with capability and motivation to succeed in placements beyond traditional age/grade parameters should be provided the opportunity to enroll in intellectually appropriate classes and educational settings.