

High Ability Program
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a High Ability Student?
 - a. The State of Indiana defines a high ability student as one who “performs at, or shows potential for performing at, an outstanding level of academic accomplishment in at least one domain when compared to students of the same age, experience, or environment; and is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.” (Indiana Code 20-36-1-3)
2. What is the CogAT Assessment?
 - a. The CogAT is a measure of potential that looks at general thinking and problem-solving skills of students and indicates how well the student uses these skills to solve verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal problems. Kindergarten takes the test using paper/pencil, and grades 2 and 5 take the test online.
3. Why is my child taking this test?
 - a. Indiana law requires the school district to use multifaceted assessments that include students from poverty, limited English proficiency, and all ethnic groups to identify high ability students in grades K-12.
4. What can I do to prepare my child for the CogAT assessment?
 - a. This is not a test that requires your child to study. The best preparation you can give your child is to encourage him/her to put forth his/her best effort on the tests and take his/her time throughout the process. It’s also important not to put pressure on students taking these tests. There are many high achieving students who may not be considered ‘gifted’, but still do very well in school.
5. Will my child always be in the High Ability program, or do students have to be re-identified’ each year?
 - a. Kindergarten and first grade students are identified provisionally, and then all students are assessed in 2nd grade for admission to the program. After being identified in 2nd grade, as long as your child is doing well and continuing to progress, s/he will remain in the program year to year.
6. Who decides? When does identification take place?
 - a. The High Ability Identification team uses an anonymous process looking at the CogAT Complete, STAR winter scores, and the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS) for students in need of a third data point. We are looking for students who have scores in the 96th percentile range or above based on our local norms. The testing window is in January and February, the identification process takes place in March, and notifications will be sent home via letter by the end of April.
7. If my child does not qualify for the High Ability program this year, will s/he be evaluated again next year?
 - a. Teachers can nominate students in grade levels that are not screened, so if your child’s data warrants a second look at placement, there is a possibility s/he could be nominated and go through the process again.
8. Who should I contact with questions regarding the CogAT Complete or the High Ability Program in general?
 - a. Any questions your child’s teacher cannot answer should be directed to your child’s Building Principal or to the Assistant Superintendent, Stephanie Hofer.
9. Who should I contact if I do not want my child to participate in testing?
 - a. If you would like to ‘opt out’ of the testing process, that is your right. Please notify your child’s Building Principal in writing. Please note: If you ‘opt out’ of the identification process, you are also opting out of any potential High Ability services for your child.