

Whitko Community Schools: High Ability Differentiated Guidance and Counseling Plan

Whitko Community Schools(WCS) recognizes that students with high abilities may have additional affective needs resulting from their increased capacity to think beyond their years, combinations of unique interests, personality characteristics and greater intensity in response than peers of their own age.

Whitko Community Schools is committed to providing a systematic and differentiated program of affective services for these students' this proactive approach will facilitate their positive adjustment and promote development of their high potential.

The Importance of an Accepting School Culture for the High Ability Student

WCS promotes a school culture that facilitates the development of academic and social-emotional development for all students, including those with high ability. As a district Whitko Community Schools:

- Allow students to take classes at higher grade levels
- Encourage students to participate in academic competitions
- Publicly celebrate academic achievements
- Promote students choice to take advanced courses through weighted grades
- Provide high ability students with an opportunity to take classes together where advanced performance is normal
- Provide access to academic teams or extracurricular activities that can provide social support

Additionally, WCS counselors contribute to the affective education of high ability students through the following measures:

- Continued education to understand how high ability students may be different while remembering they are still children/adolescents with developmental tasks
- Support programming options that allow high ability students to be placed together for instruction. Learning beside others of advanced academic ability helps meet high ability students' affective needs
- Listen carefully to each high ability student express themselves as they explore their individuality, goals and issues
- Facilitate discussion groups to provide the opportunity for high ability students to explore and process their thoughts and feelings regarding the label of high ability, the intensities associated with being high ability, how to set and achieve goals and set appropriate expectations of themselves and others
- Remain alert to the social dynamics of the student's environment; be especially sensitive to issues faced by the non-dominant culture or twice-exceptional high ability student

- Advocate for school policies and programs that offer more advanced options and allow greater flexibility in programs, services, and placements to meet the academic needs of high ability students
- Collaborate with high ability personnel to provide professional development for teachers, staff and parents about the social and emotional needs of students with high abilities
- Develop and implement a counseling and guidance plan with specific attention to issues and concerns of high ability students
- Remain alert to opportunities for improving the “Culture of Acceptance of Advanced Performance”
- Facilitate guided reading of literature and guided viewing of video to support positive affective development in high ability students.
- Recommend related reading for parents and teachers of high ability students
- Encourage high ability students to participate in extracurricular activities, hobbies, and physical outlets to relieve stress, socialize, and learn about collaboration.
- Provide college and career guidance, increasing high ability students’ awareness of advanced opportunities for high ability students
- Arrange for mentorship in high ability students’ areas of interest and abilities outside the school environment
- Support acceleration options for individual high ability students when appropriate
- Assist high ability students, their families and teachers with transition when class placements, curriculum or schedules are different from the general student body.

Parent Education and support

WCS is committed to providing education for parents regarding high ability students’ social and emotional needs. Whitko Community Schools shares with parents information on programs and services available for high ability students in the district or region beginning at Kindergarten annual roundup events. WCS provides high ability parent resources on the district website, and the high ability coordinator distributes a newsletter to parents of high ability students.

Differentiated Guidance Activities

All students at WCS receive Guidance and Counseling services through lessons and activities specific to their developmental level. These services align with the Indiana Guidance Standards. FCSC further differentiates its Guidance and Counseling services for high ability students in two ways:

- Differentiate grade level appropriate topics within the classroom for identified high ability students
- Teach unique lessons specific to the needs of high ability students while other students participate in a different activity

Below is a grid of differentiated topics for high ability students by grade level.

Grade Level	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4
K	Be Yourself	Diversity	Sensory Management	Managing Emotions
1	Friendship	Coping Skills	Communication	Responsibility
2	Perfectionism	Conflict Resolution	Appreciating Differences	Stress Management
3	Communication	Sensory Management	Friendship/Elitism	Social Justice/Fairness
4	College/Career	Cooperation	Self-Esteem	Leadership
5	Anxiety	Perfectionism	Study Skills	Friendship/Elitism
6	Elitism	College/Career	Time Management	Communication
7	Anxiety	Perfectionism	Study Skills/Time Management	Friendship
8	Identity	College/Career	Time Management	Empathy/Perspective Taking
9	Study Skills	Time Management	Perfectionism	Stress Management
10	Coping Strategies	College/Career	Communication	Responsibility
11	Identity	College/Career	Time Management	Leadership
12	Identity	College/Career	Time Management	Stress Management