

Bruning-Davenport USD

High Ability Learner Program

2026-27

Nebraska, Rule 3 Definition

“Learner with High Ability means a student who gives evidence of high performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, or artistic capacity or in specific academic fields and who requires accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs in order to develop those capabilities fully.”

K-12 HAL Philosophy

Bruning-Davenport USD recognizes that each student is unique. We strive to provide high-quality instruction to all students and also take into account their individual needs.

The purpose of the High Ability Learner program is to provide an inclusive environment and create opportunities for students to develop talents in their domain of strength while focusing on the specific affective, social, and academic needs of gifted and talented students.

The High Ability Learner program is designed to identify students in grades K-12 who exhibit high performance capabilities and foster talent in students who display potential. Appropriate services shall be provided to these students.

Definition of High Ability Learner

Bruning-Davenport USD uses an inclusive definition of “High Ability Learner” in an attempt to include as many students as possible, and is based on the Case for Excellence (1993) and ESEA (2001). The definition is as follows:

“High Ability Learners are children who perform or show potential to perform in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment.”

HAL Program Goals & Objectives

The goal of the HAL program is to provide a differentiated program that will meet the needs of our districts’ high ability learners. The program will strive to:

- Identify students who demonstrate potential abilities of high performance in recognized areas of giftedness.
- Provide advanced learning opportunities for all students.
- Provide education services that meet the needs of all high ability learners.
- Provide professional development opportunities to staff in order to promote a better understanding of the needs of high ability learners, and the services available to meet those needs.

- Follow the identification procedures as outlined in the district identification plan for high ability learners.
 - All staff members shall be made aware of the identification procedures.
- To meet the students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional needs.
 - Within the regular classroom a variety of instructional techniques including but not limited to compacting, alternative assignments, advanced placement, contract learning, differentiated curriculum, and independent studies will be used as necessary.
 - Within the regular classroom flexible grouping, including but not limited to ability, achievement, cluster, and cross-age grouping will be provided as necessary.
 - Enrichment programs will include but are not limited to within-class enrichment, whole class enrichment, before and after school enrichment, field trips, school-wide enrichment, learning centers, extracurricular programs, community sponsored programs, and pull-out services.
 - The counselor will be available to assist teachers and students in meeting individual needs.
 - To evaluate student program option choices on an individual basis at the discretion of the classroom teacher in conjunction with the HAL coordinators.

HAL Identification Procedures

A student must meet one of five criteria for identification as a High-Ability Learner. The three criteria in grades 5-8 are: earning a 95% or higher on the student percentile range for the Math, Reading, Language Usage, or General Science tests on the norm-referenced test, Measure of Academic Progress; earning an "exceeds standards" on the state reading, state math test, or state science assessments (i.e. NSCAS-R, NSCAS-M, NSCAS-S); or, teacher recommendation. The additional criteria for grades 9-12 are: sustain a 3.75 GPA in core studies (math, English, science, and social studies); AND earn at least a 26 on the ACT in English, Reading, Science, or Math. If a student meets the criteria during his or her middle school years, he or she must re-qualify under the stated criteria during grades 9-12 in order to be considered a part of the High-Ability Learner program and be eligible for benefits. Membership will be for two (2) years, then the student must requalify. Additions to membership will occur biannually each year.

HAL Screening Process:

All students in Bruning-Davenport USD will be screened in grades K-12 for our district's high ability services based on the following:

- MAP Reading, Science, ELA, and/or Math Achievement test scores of 95th percentile or higher
- Teacher referral/letter of recommendation.
- ACT 26+

Students who have a score at the 95th percentile or higher on the Fall Reading, ELA, Science, and Math MAP test and/or the Winter Reading, ELA, Science, and Math MAP test will be considered for gifted and talented services.

- Other indicators may be included: other test scores, checklists, etc.

After the testing concludes, students will be placed on the HAL list.

Exit Policy:

Students remain HAL eligible for two full years and then must requalify.

Additional Program Services, Options, and Strategies (including but not limited to)

Curriculum Enrichment
Flexible Grouping
Curriculum Compacting
Advanced Placement
Advanced Elective Classes
Independent Study Opportunities
Dual Enrollment
Cluster Grouping
Mentorships/Shadowing
Extra-Curricular School Offerings
Counseling & Guidance
Career Exploration

Evaluation

Annual evaluations of the HAL program shall be conducted by using any of the following measures: surveys, interviews, and program evaluations aligned to AQueSSTT. Information gathered will be used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the HAL program and how we can improve. Student needs, program design, curriculum, learning environment, student identification, staff development, and other resources will be evaluated.

Staff Development

School staff shall receive training which will include, but is not limited to, areas such as HAL characteristics, social and emotional needs, identification, curriculum, assessment techniques, and instructional strategies.

Teachers will be encouraged to attend seminars and conferences related to high ability learning (i.e. Nebraska Association for Gifted conference, ESU workshops, Webinars, etc.).

Teachers, counselors, and administrators will be made aware annually of which students have been identified and are included in the program.

Management Plan

The High Ability Learning program will be led by the principal, Mrs. Kowalski, the director of HAL Services. Mrs. Kowalski will ensure the quality of training and implementation within the schools. She will work with all staff collaboratively in order to build relationships and create a positive environment to foster the needs of High Ability Learners.

Appendix

Teacher Referral Form/Teacher Recommendation

Teacher High Ability Learner Referral Form

Student's Name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

What words best describe the student's thinking process?

☐ Imitative ☐ Independent ☐ Creative ☐ Other _____

	<i>Please ✓ appropriate box</i>	Almost Always	Quite Often	Sometimes	Not Often or Never
Advanced Language	Uses multi-syllable words and has a large vocabulary for age level				
	Re-words his/her language for younger or less mature children				
	Explains how unrelated things are similar				
	Uses rich imagery; unusually descriptive				
	Uses similes, metaphors, or analogies to express insights				
	Uses precise language of a discipline				
Analytical Thinking	Demonstrates complex or abstract thinking				
	Analyzes tasks				
	Notices a surprising depth of details about surroundings				
	Takes apart and reassembles things or ideas with skill				
	Expresses relationships between past and present experiences				
	Makes up songs, stories, or riddles about experiences				
	Organizes collections of things uniquely; likes to plan or arrange things				
Meaning Motivation	Is philosophical; pursues issues atypical of age peers				
	Asks surprisingly intellectual questions				
	Is curious; experiments				
	Demonstrates an unexpected depth of knowledge in one or more areas				
	Exhibits intense task commitment and energy when pursuing interests				
	Remembers; shows an extraordinary ability to process and retain information				
	Is independent				
Perspective	Interprets another's point of view insightfully				
	Shows dimension, angle or perspective in art, writing, math solutions or problem solving				
	Creates complex shapes, patterns or graphics				
	Interprets past, present, and future ramifications				
	Is attuned to the aesthetic characteristics of things				

