

2026–2027 HAL Consortium Plan Development & Continuous Improvement

The 2026–2027 school year represents the first year of the ESU 17 High Ability Learner (HAL) Consortium, consisting of Ainsworth Community Schools, Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools, Keya Paha County Schools, Rock County Public Schools, and Valentine Community Schools. As participating districts begin working collaboratively through the consortium, ESU 17 and district HAL representatives will use this year to intentionally review, align, and strengthen HAL plans and practices in accordance with Nebraska Rule 3.

Each participating district will retain and maintain its own district HAL plan, reflecting the unique needs, resources, structures, and opportunities available within its local school community. Through the consortium, districts will work collaboratively to establish coherent foundational practices and shared expectations that will be reflected within each district's individual HAL plan. This approach allows districts to maintain local ownership and flexibility while creating greater consistency and equitable practices for High Ability Learners across the ESU 17 service area.

Each participating district enters the consortium with existing HAL practices, procedures, and plans at various stages of development and refinement. Current district plans and practices will serve as the foundation for this work as the consortium identifies areas in which greater coherence and consistency would benefit students.

During the 2026–2027 school year, ESU 17 and district HAL representatives will collaboratively review and refine HAL practices, with particular attention to:

- establishing a clear, equitable, and cohesive process for identifying High Ability Learners across participating districts;
- reviewing identification criteria and decision rules to ensure the use of multiple measures and opportunities for students to demonstrate areas of high ability;
- aligning procedures related to identification, notification, portability, appeals, exit procedures, and documentation with Nebraska Rule 3;
- identifying meaningful services, enrichment opportunities, and programming responsive to the strengths, interests, and needs of HAL students;
- gathering student and district input to help guide consortium programming and priorities; and
- establishing processes for ongoing review and evaluation of HAL programming and practices.

This work has already begun through the ESU 17 HAL Representative Consortium. During the September 14, 2026 meeting, district representatives reviewed current district HAL plans, discussed similarities and differences in local practices, and identified greater consistency in HAL identification practices as an initial area of focus. Representatives also identified the importance of student voice and agreed to gather student input regarding areas of interest and potential HAL opportunities.

Throughout the 2026–2027 school year, HAL representatives will continue to work collaboratively with their district leadership and appropriate district teams to review and strengthen their individual district HAL plans while contributing to the development of coherent practices across the consortium.

ESU 17, as the fiscal agent, will facilitate this collaborative process, provide Rule 3 guidance and resources, maintain required consortium documentation, and support participating districts as their plans and practices are reviewed and refined. Individual districts will retain ownership of their HAL plans and local programming decisions, while the consortium will provide a structure for collaboration, shared learning, and the development of coherent practices that support equitable opportunities for students across all five districts.

The goal of this first-year transition is not to create identical HAL programs across participating districts. Rather, the goal is to establish a shared foundation of high-quality and equitable practices while honoring the unique strengths, resources, needs, and opportunities within each district and community.

Ainsworth Community Schools
High-Ability Learner Plan

1. Philosophy on Educational Services to Learners of High Ability

The Mission of Ainsworth Community Schools is to provide a safe environment in which students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to be successful individuals in an ever-changing world. Because this mission statement is all-inclusive, we are committed to serving our high-ability learners, along with all the other students and their unique needs.

We believe the place to begin serving our high-ability learners is in the regular classroom, with well-trained teachers. In addition, however, we know we must offer additional educational experiences in order to meet the high-ability learners' needs.

2. Operational Definition of a High-Ability Learner

High-ability learners are those students who possess or who are capable of developing outstanding intellectual ability, creative or artistic ability, leadership ability, and/or superior academic ability.

3. Goals and Objectives

A. Continued staff development so that teachers can create a meaningful program of learning which is challenging, practical, and effective.

B. Identifying of students in all the schools who meet the criteria as high ability learners so these students may develop to the fullest extent of their potential.

C. Assisting identified students in taking advantage of learning and performing opportunities available to them not only within their individual school, but also on a broader basis of the adjoining counties and outside our immediate geographic area.

D. Assisting parents of identified students in fostering the interest and abilities of their children.

4. Identification Procedures

Presently, tools of identification include several parts of the norm-referenced achievement test. We use several of the total battery scores, not just the composite scores. The classroom teacher is also an important part of the identification procedure. We are planning to develop improved methods of identifying high-ability learners by including more teacher input.

5. Description of the Continuum of Programming Services, Options, and Strategies

Our strategy is to serve high-ability students well, within the classroom, and encourage them to participate in the many, varied opportunities beyond the classroom. Teachers are continually being inserviced and encouraged to learn more about differentiated learning, learning styles, multiple intelligences and higher-level thinking skills. Beyond that, we offer additional, educational experiences for high-ability learners, including, but not limited to, the Destination Imagination Program for 2nd through 12th graders, Honor Choir for 3rd through 5th graders, the Geography Bee, Quiz Bowl, History Day competitions, Fine Arts clubs and organizations, student council, Mock Trial, all athletic activities, performing opportunities in drama, music, and speech, distance learning opportunities, post-secondary enrollment options, field trips, career and leadership opportunities in the Career Opportunity Education program, and many more.

6. Evaluation and Future Planning Process

We will evaluate our identification procedures and our services by using some of the materials provided by the Nebraska Department of Education in the document, "Procedures for the Identification of High-Ability Learners". We will assess what is and what is not effective in the identification process and generate ideas to help us improve the process. We will evaluate our programs and services by documenting the achievement of high-ability learners and participation of high-ability learners in extended educational opportunities.

7. Staff Development and Training

Staff development will continue in conjunction with our school improvement goal. Our school improvement goal is to improve reading comprehension with emphasis on vocabulary development. All action plans incorporate activities and strategies for improving achievement or behavior for *all* students, including high-ability learners. For example, we are having a national speaker train us on how to better teach students to read and comprehend. These strategies will apply to challenged learners *and* high-ability learners.

8. Management Outline

As with any program within our school system, the Superintendent will be ultimately responsible for the budget preparation and assignment of use of the funds. The counselors and administrators will help plan and evaluate the identification procedures and the programs, options, and strategies.

Philosophy on HAL Services

Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools are committed to providing education and related services based on each student's unique needs. Therefore, the system seeks to provide alternative activities and opportunities which will capitalize on students' abilities and encourage their continuing development.

Operational Definition of High Ability Learner

Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools adheres to the NDE Rule 3 definition of high ability learners:

"Learner with high ability means a student that performs, or has the capacity to perform, at greater levels in one or more domains of instruction in comparison to individuals of the same age, educational experience, or environment and who requires accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs in order to develop those abilities fully."

Goals and Objectives

Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools will adhere to the following:

Goals:

- Use multiple assessment measures and appraisals so our schools can identify students in different talent areas and at different ages.
- Use a multidisciplinary team approach to identify learners with high ability and maintain ongoing identification.
- Provide inservice for instructional staff on definition, identification and programming.
- Utilize ongoing evaluation.

Objectives:

- Specific program objectives for high ability learners will be determined based on student needs. Objectives may address problem solving, critical and creative thinking processes, self directed learning, communication skills, and self actualizing experiences.

Procedures for Identification

Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools has developed an identification process including multiple criteria in an effort to be inclusive rather than exclusive. This team process will include

a combination of norm-referenced instruments, criterion referenced instruments, and local assessment. The district will make these written plans available to the citizens of the district. The identification system will:

1. Use multiple assessment measures and appraisals so that students in different talent areas and different ages can be identified.
2. Provide students with equal access to identification opportunities.
3. Identify talents that are not readily apparent in students, as well as those that are obvious.

Our district may choose from the following instruments when identifying learners with high ability:

- Achievement tests
- Tests of intellectual ability
- Tests of creative thinking
- Teacher questionnaire
- Parent questionnaire
- Peer evaluation
- Self evaluation
- Classroom performance
- Case study

The identification process provides provision for parents, guardians, or other persons exercising legal or actual charge or control over the child to appeal any decision of the identification or non-identification of their child, following our district's appeals process.

Reporting Requirements

Within the first 30 days of each school year, the school district administration shall:

- Notify classroom teachers of students who meet the criteria for learners of high ability and the areas of high ability of each of those students.
- Notify parents, guardians, or other persons who have legal or actual charge or control of children identified, as high ability learners, that their child has been so identified and provide them with information about that identification.

The school district shall annually provide the Nebraska Department of Education with a copy of criteria used for identifying learners with high ability, the number of students

identified according to criteria, and the number of students participating in high ability programs.

Program and Service

Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools shall serve identified high ability learners by using instructional curriculum patterns that include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Self Contained Programs for High Ability Learners
 - a. Self-contained classroom programs for high ability students
 - b. Special classes or seminars for high ability students
 - c. Resource center programs for high ability students
2. Advanced Curriculum-Based Options
 - a. Honors classes
 - b. Advanced exploratory or elective classes
 - c. Advanced skill development class
 - d. Advanced classes through telecommunications
 - e. Dual credit classes
3. Within Class Instructional Differentiation or Curricular Adaptations
 - a. Curriculum compacting
 - b. Alternative assignments, productions, pacing, materials, content
 - c. Contract learning
 - d. Flexible grouping
 - e. Individualized planning and/or instruction through IEP, PLP, etc.
4. Grouping for Instruction and/or Activities
 - a. Ability or achievement grouping
 - b. Cluster grouping
 - c. Cross-age, multi-age grouping
5. Acceleration in Student Placement
 - a. Content acceleration
 - b. Post-secondary enrollment option (concurrent enrollment, college classes)
 - c. Early entrance (to kindergarten, college)
 - d. Allowing a senior student to finish high school courses on a college campus
6. Enrichment Programming
 - a. Whole-class enrichment
 - b. Field trips and off-campus enrichment
 - c. School-wide enrichment
 - d. Learning centers
 - e. Summer enrichment programs

- f. Community sponsored classes and activities
- g. Competitions
- h. Fairs, festivals, performances
- i. "Imported" programs
 - i. National Geography Bee
 - ii. History Day
 - iii. Academic Decathlon, Academic Olympiads
- 7. Independent Studies
 - a. Independent study classes
 - b. Individual projects
- 8. Affective Needs Programming
 - a. Counseling programs
 - b. Career and/or future education planning
 - c. Leadership programming
- 9. Mentorships, Internships, Apprenticeships
 - a. Guidance is given to pair mentors and students as appropriate
 - b. Student aides
- 10. Senior Project
 - a. All seniors receive laptops, participate in a research field trip, and are given guidance as PLP's are created. Career fields are integrated and English and Technology connections are made for students at each individual's pace

Assessment/Accountability Categories and Types

The system will gather and maintain aggregate data measuring the academic progress of all identified high ability learners by selecting from the following:

- 1. Demonstrate Achievement, Authentic Performance Measures
 - a. Portfolio assessment and/or accountability
 - b. Exhibitions, exit projects, or performances
 - c. Juried presentations, performances, demonstrations
 - d. Product/project/performance assessment using evaluation criteria or rubrics
 - e. Completion of independent study contracts, fulfillment of IEP/PLP goals
 - f. Competition results
 - g. Admission to program based performance
 - h. Diploma, certification of advanced performance
 - i. GPA
- 2. Testing

- a. Norm-referenced testing
 - b. Criterion-referenced testing
 - c. Testing out, credit by examination
 - d. Out-of-level testing
 - e. Pretest/posttest
 - f. Teacher-designed tests of advanced student knowledge and/or skill
- 3. Interpretive/Subjective Assessment
 - a. Case study
 - b. Anecdotal records, documentation
 - c. Parent conferences with teacher, student to monitor and/or report on progress achievement
 - d. Mentor/teacher conferences with student to monitor progress/achievement
 - e. Interviews
 - f. Learning logs or journals
 - g. Teacher/student narratives of learning
 - h. Written feedback from teacher to student/parent
 - i. Informal or formal staffing or child study conferences
- 4. Inventories, Rating Scales, Observation, or Matrices
 - a. Checklists
 - b. Inventories
 - c. Rating scales
 - d. Questionnaires
 - e. Surveys, appraisals
- 5. Self, Parent, Peer Evaluation of Student Learning and/or Achievement

Staff Development and Support

Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools will provide awareness of the district-wide plan for learners with high ability to teachers and administrators. The teachers and administrators will also have an understanding of the characteristics of such students and best practices based upon research. Teachers who provide instruction and services, that are part of the program for high ability students, will be provided training. The training will enable teachers to design and implement classroom experiences which utilize differentiation of curriculum and instruction. It will also enable them to assess the work and progress of learners with high ability.

Evaluation and Future Planning

The program will be reviewed and evaluated yearly by parents, educators, students, and community members using quality indicators and illustrative criteria for both

curriculum and student based components. This review will include program strengths and weaknesses in the following areas:

- Program design
- Student needs
- Learning environment
- Curriculum
- Student identification
- Personnel qualifications
- Resources
- Communities
- Staff development
- Cost effectiveness

The program will be revised based on the results of the yearly review. The evaluation plan and yearly review shall be available for review by interested persons.

Description of the Continuum of Program Services, Options and Strategies

Depending on the needs of each identified, the district team will design the instructional program for each high ability learner through the use of one or more of the following strategies: differential, accelerated, enriched, compacted curriculum/s, student groupings, and/or a mentoring/shadowing program.

Management Plan

Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools utilizes staff development and multi-disciplinary planning team training to raise awareness and focus information on the needs of high ability learners. Information, along with our school-wide plan, will be made available to the public via our school newsletter.

Keya Paha County Public Schools HAL Plan

Vision & Mission

Keya Paha County Public Schools is committed to providing educational opportunities for our students to be productive citizens. We strive to align with the NDE Rule 3 vision and mission for high ability learners which states:

Vision: All gifted and talented students in Nebraska have meaningful opportunities for academic and personal growth commensurate with their abilities as well as career development to actualize their full potential and become lifelong learners who are college, career, and civic-ready.

Mission: Locally identified high ability learners (HALs) benefit from targeted services and opportunities to develop their unique talents and demonstrate consistent growth. High ability learners will have access to a variety of school- and community-based learning experiences and enrichment activities that are also aligned to college and career-ready standards, as well as include families and caregivers as active participants in their programming. Educators who provide direct support to HAL students should consider these foundational elements related to identification, academic content, programming, and equitable access to opportunities.

Definition of HAL

Learner with high ability means a student that performs, or has the ability to perform, at greater levels in one or more domains of instruction in comparison to individuals of the same age, educational experience, and environment, and who requires accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs in order to develop those abilities fully.

Goals & Objectives:

- a. The differentiated curriculum facilitates gifted students in their ability to meet or exceed state standards.
- b. The differentiated curriculum provides for the balanced development of critical, creative, problem solving and research skills, advanced content, and authentic and appropriate products.
- c. The differentiated curriculum focuses primarily on depth and complexity of content, advanced or accelerated pacing of content and novelty.
- d. The differentiated curriculum facilitates development of ethical standards, positive self-concepts, sensitivity and responsibility to others, and contributions to society.
- e. Identify students who demonstrate potential abilities of high performance
- f. Provide services to all high ability students
- g. Provide and support professional development to staff in order to promote a better understanding of the needs of high ability learners and services available to meet those needs
- h. To meet students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional needs

Identification Procedures:

Keya Paha County students in grade 4-12 students are identified by meeting any combination of three of the following criteria:

- ❖ Cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher in grades 9th through 12th.
- ❖ NSCAS scores at College and Career Ready level
- ❖ ACT, Pre ACT, or ACT 9 Scores in the 85th percentile or above
- ❖ Semester grades of 94 or above in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies
- ❖ Screener Information (Fastbridge) College Pathway in either aReading or aMath
- ❖ Teacher Nomination with accompanying checklist scale of HAL characteristics

Keya Paha County students in grades K-3 are identified by the following criteria:

- ❖ Teacher Nomination with accompanying rating scale of HAL characteristics
- ❖ Screener Information
 - FastBridge College Pathway in aMath or aReading
 - mClass Composite Score is Advanced
- ❖ Portfolio of work items (at least 3) that exhibits advanced language, creative & abstract thinking, interest in topics beyond peers, strong sense of self and surroundings,

Parents are informed of the district's criteria and procedures for identifying gifted and talented students. Parents are notified, within the first 30 days of each year, that their student has been identified as a HAL student and how that identification was determined. Teachers are informed of the high ability learners in their classes.

Continuum of Services:

Classroom teachers are encouraged to use a variety of methods to impact the learning of high ability learners:

- a. differentiated instruction
- b. compacting curriculum
- c. flexible grouping
- d. mentoring
- e. ability/achievement grouping
- f. cross age grouping

The district could consider the following services in some cases for students:

- a. grade acceleration
- b. curriculum acceleration
- c. independent study

- d. enrichment activities

Specific Programming

- a. School-wide enrichment in grades K-12
- b. Quiz Bowl for grades 7-8
- c. Quiz Bowl for grades 9-12

Affective Counseling is provided through the counseling office regarding personal and social awareness, specialized career awareness-investigation-and planning.

Evaluation:

- a. Components of the program are reviewed annually by the school administration each fall by October 1.
- b. The school improvement committee will consider HAL student data in the district's MTSS processes and evaluate their performance data.
- c. Results of said evaluations will be presented to the local Board of Education on or before the December board meeting.

Professional Development Training & Support:

- a. The district encourages teachers to focus on high ability learners as one of the areas of professional growth.
- b. The district actively searches for professional development opportunities to provide to its staff regarding high ability students.

Budget:

- a. Base Funds & Matching Funds will be applied for annually to fund HAL programs: staffing, professional development, materials, and equipment.

**Rock County Public Schools
HAL Plan
Revised 08/21/26**

Philosophy:

The mission of the Rock County Public Schools is to provide its students with positive educational experiences that instill life-long learning skills to nurture responsible, contributing citizens. One avenue to achieve our goal is to provide curriculum alternatives to youth of any age that may be identified as high ability learners. This includes the time to engage in deeper intellectual pursuits and the guidance to do so. Another avenue is to provide school-wide enrichment to all students, grades K-12, enabling students to examine classroom topics more intensively through a variety of methods.

Definition of HAL:

"Learner with high ability means a student that performs, or has the capacity to perform, at greater levels in one or more domains of instruction in comparison to individuals of the same age, educational experience, or environment and who requires accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs in order to develop those abilities fully." -Section 79-1107 (3) of Rule 3.

Goals and Objectives:

- a. The differentiated curriculum facilitates gifted students in their ability to meet or exceed state standards
- b. The differentiated curriculum provides for the balanced development of critical, creative, problem solving and research skills, advanced content and authentic and appropriate products.
- c. The differentiated curriculum focuses primarily on depth and complexity of content, advanced or accelerated pacing of content and novelty.
- d. The differentiated curriculum facilitates development of ethical standards, positive self-concepts, sensitivity and responsibility to others and contributions to society.

Identification Procedures:

Junior High and High School students are identified by meeting at least **TWO** of the following criteria:

- MAP Achievement scores of 94% or higher in Reading, Math or Science
 - Will use Fall MAP scores for Fall qualification.
 - Spring MAP will be used for Seniors for qualifications in the fall.
 - Will use Winter MAP scores for Spring qualification.
- ACT - Score of 28 or higher
- Finished in the top 10%, along with an A average, in at least one high school core course (English, Math, Science), the previous semester.
 - Will use sixth grade spring semester scores for seventh graders for fall qualification.
- Teacher Nomination
- Students who qualified as HAL students during the previous school year may use that qualification as one of the criteria for qualifying during the current school year.

The Bassett Grade School students are identified by meeting at least **TWO** of the following criteria:

- MAP Achievement scores that are in the 94% or higher in Reading, Math, or Science
- Dibels - Above Benchmark (Reading or Math)
- Teacher Recommendation
- Students who qualified as HAL students during the previous school year may use that qualification as one of the criteria for qualifying during the current school year.

-Initial Identification, grades third-twelfth, happens within the first 30 school days of the beginning of each school year.

-Data is reviewed twice a year. Students, who had not been previously qualified, will be notified of HAL qualification within 30 school days of the start of the second semester.

-Parents/Guardians are informed of the district's criteria and procedures for identifying High Ability Learners. Parents are notified, within 30 school days of each school year, that their student has been identified as a HAL student and how that identification was determined.

-High Ability Learner Coordinator will notify teachers of incoming students that qualify for HAL. The coordinator will review the student's cumulative folder and request any additional information from the previous school.

-Teachers are informed of the high ability learners in their classes.

-Parents may contact the High Ability Learner Coordinator to request a review of an identification decision on which there is a disagreement. Parents must request the review within 15 school days of identification notification. The school will conduct the review and present the findings within 20 school days of the parents' review request.

Continuum of Services:

Classroom teachers are encouraged to use a variety of methods to impact the learning of high ability learners:

- a. Differentiated curriculum
- b. Compacting curriculum
- c. Flexible grouping
- d. Mentoring
- e. Ability/Achievement grouping
- f. Cross age grouping

The district could consider the following services in some cases for senior high students:

- a. Grade acceleration
- b. Independent study
- c. Advanced Academic Courses
- d. Dual Credit Courses
- e. Job Mentoring

Specific Programming:

- a. School-Wide enrichment opportunities in grades K-12
- b. Quiz Bowl for grades 7-8
- c. Quiz Bowl for grades 9-12
- d. Math Bowl for grades 9-12

Affective Counseling is provided through the counseling office regarding personal and social awareness, specialized career awareness-investigation and planning. In addition, students in grades 7-12 are assigned advisors that counsel students on a variety of issues that include, but are not limited to academic advice, social-emotional concerns and educational guidance.

Evaluation:

- a. Components of the program are reviewed biannually by the High Ability Coordinator and school administration, formally and informally.
- b. Yearly surveys will be given to all constituents of the program to determine HAL program direction.
- c. Results of said evaluation will be presented to the local Board of Education and accessible to all constituencies of the program.

Professional Development Training and Support:

- a. The district encourages teachers to focus on high ability learners as one of the areas of professional growth.
- b. The district appoints a High Ability Coordinator and encourages the person to attend training and conferences in gifted education.
- c. The district actively searches for professional development opportunities to provide to its staff regarding high ability students.

Budget:

Base Funds and Matching Funds will be applied annually to fund HAL programs, staffing, professional development, materials and equipment.

Valentine Community Schools High Ability Learner Plan

Cherry County 16-0006

Philosophy on Educational Service to High Ability Learners

The Valentine Community Schools are committed to providing education and related services based on each student's unique learning needs. Therefore, the district seeks to provide activities and opportunities that will capitalize on students' abilities and encourage students' development.

Definition of High Ability Learner

The Valentine Community Schools adhere to the NDE Rule 3 definition of high ability learners:

"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."

Goals and Objectives

The Valentine Community Schools will adhere to the following:

Goals:

Use multiple assessment measures and appraisals so schools can identify students in different talent areas and at different ages.

Use a multidisciplinary team approach to identify learners with high ability and maintain ongoing identification.

Provide inservice for instructional staff on definition, identification, and programming.

Utilize ongoing evaluation.

Objectives:

Specific program objectives for high ability learners will be determined based on students' strengths and needs and the available school resources of people, time, and money. Objectives may address advanced levels of content, processes, and/or products; problem solving; critical and creative thinking; self-directed learning; communication skills; and self-actualizing experiences.

Procedures for Identification

Valentine Community Schools have developed an identification process including multiple criteria in an effort to be inclusive rather than exclusive. This team process will include a combination of norm-referenced instruments, criterion-referenced instruments, and a local needs assessment. The identification process will:

1. Use multiple assessment measures and appraisals so that students in different talent areas and different ages can be identified.
2. Provide students with equal access to identification opportunities.
3. Identify talents that are not readily apparent in students, as well as those that are obvious.

Schools may choose from the following instruments and/or processes when identifying high ability learners.

- Achievement tests
- Tests of intellectual ability
- Tests of creative thinking
- Teacher questionnaire
- Parent questionnaire
- Peer nomination
- Self evaluation
- Classroom performance
- Case study

Valentine Community Schools identify high ability students through automatic test score identification or through case study identification by the Case Study Team. The identification process will be continuous throughout the school year.

Automatic Test Score Identification:

- Individual IQ test score in top 3% (WISC-IV or Stanford-Binet)
- Two years of achievement test composite scores of 96% or greater
- Two years of Otis Lennon or other IQ correlate scores of 130 or greater

Screening Pool for Case Study Identification – The Case Study Team will be composed of the following people: high ability coordinator, administrator, guidance counselor, classroom teacher(s). Students may be referred to the Screening Pool for a case study for any of the following reasons. The goal of a Case Study is to identify students in the top ten percent.

- Achievement test composite of 90% or greater

- Achievement subtest composite score of 96% or greater in Reading, Language, Math, Social Studies or Science
- Test of intellectual ability score of 125 or greater
- Test of creative thinking score of 90% or greater
- Teacher questionnaire nomination
- Parent questionnaire nomination
- Self nomination

The identification process provides provision for parents, guardians, or other persons exercising legal or actual charge or control over the child to appeal any decision of the identification or non-identification of their child, following the district's appeals process.

Appeals Process: If parents, guardians, or other persons exercising legal or actual charge or control over the child disagrees with any decision of the school regarding the identification or non-identification of their child as a high ability learner, the following steps should be taken:

1. Every attempt should be made to resolve these differences with the high ability coordinator and/or building principal as soon as they arise.
2. If differences regarding identification cannot be resolved, a petition may be filed with the Board of Education.
3. The petition must contain the following information:
 - a. The name, address, and telephone number of the person filing the petition.
 - b. The name, birthdate, and current educational placement of the child.
 - c. A short description of the dispute.
 - d. A statement that reasonable efforts have been made to settle the dispute and a statement that settlement does not seem likely.
 - e. A statement of what outcome the petitioner is requesting.
 - f. The signature of the person filing the petition.
4. The Board of Education will schedule a due process hearing to consider the matter.
5. The decision of the Board of Education will be final.

Reporting Requirements

Within the first thirty (30) days of each school year, the school district administration shall:

- Notify the classroom teachers with an initial list of students who meet the criteria for high ability learners.
- Notify the parents, guardians, or other persons who have legal or actual charge or control of children identified as high ability learners that their child has been so identified and provide them with information about how their child was identified.

The school district shall annually provide the Nebraska Department of Education with a copy of criteria used for identifying high ability learners, the number of students identified according to criteria, and the number of students participating in high ability programs.

Options for Program Services and Strategies

Valentine Community Schools shall serve identified high ability learners by using instructional programs and processes that may include, but will not be limited to the following:

1. Self Contained Programs for High Ability Students
 - a. Magnet program
 - b. Pull-out classes
 - c. Self-contained classroom programs
 - d. Special classes or seminars
 - e. Resource center programs
2. Advanced Curriculum-Based Options
 - a. Honors classes
 - b. Advanced Placement classes
 - c. Advanced class in a core curriculum area
 - d. Advanced exploratory or elective class
 - e. Advanced skill development class
 - f. Advanced classes through telecommunications
3. Within Class Instructional Differentiation or Curricular Adaptations
 - a. Curriculum compacting
 - b. Alternative assignments, productions, pacing, materials, content
 - c. Contract learning
 - d. Flexible grouping
 - e. Individualized planning and/or instruction
4. Grouping for Instruction and/or Activities
 - a. Ability or achievement grouping
 - b. Cluster grouping
 - c. Cross-age, multi-age grouping
5. Acceleration in Student Placement
 - a. Grade skipping (radical acceleration)
 - b. Content acceleration
 - c. Post-secondary enrollment options (concurrent enrollment, college classes)
 - d. Telescoping (compacting three years into two years)
 - e. Early entrance (kindergarten, college)
6. Enrichment Programming
 - a. Within-class enrichment (individual or small group)
 - b. Whole-class enrichment
 - c. Before school, after school

- d. Field trips and off-campus enrichment
 - e. School-wide enrichment
 - f. Learning Centers
 - g. Summer enrichment programs
 - h. Extra-curricular and co-curricular programs
 - i. Community sponsored classes and activities
 - j. Competitions
 - k. Fairs, festivals, performances
 - l. "Imported" programs
 - i. Omnibus
 - ii. Odyssey of the Mind
 - iii. National Geography Bee
 - iv. Math Counts
 - v. Junior Great Books
 - vi. Quiz Bowl, Knowledge Bowl, Knowledge Master Open
 - vii. History Day
 - viii. Academic Decathlon, Academic Olympiads
7. Independent Studies
- a. Independent study classes
 - b. In-depth study
 - c. Individual projects
8. Affective Needs Programming
- a. Guidance/counseling programs
 - b. Career and/or future education planning
 - c. Leadership programming
 - d. Autonomous Learner Model
9. Mentorship's, Internships, Apprenticeships

Assessment/Accountability Categories and Types

The Valentine Community Schools will gather and maintain data measuring the progress of high ability learners by selecting from the following:

- 1. Demonstrated Achievement, Authentic Performance Measures
 - a. Portfolio assessment and/or accountability (best works, process)
 - b. Exhibitions, exit projects or performances
 - c. Juried presentations, performances, demonstrations
 - d. Product/project/performance assessment using evaluation criteria or rubrics
 - e. Competition results
 - f. Completion of independent study contracts, fulfillment of individual goals
 - g. Admission to program based on performance
 - h. Awards, honors, recognition based on performance

- i. Diploma, certification of advanced performance
 - j. GPA
- 2. Testing
 - a. Examinations (AP, International Baccalaureate)
 - b. Master-learning levels testing
 - c. Norm-referenced testing
 - d. Criterion-referenced testing
 - e. Testing out, credit by examination
 - f. Out-of-level testing
 - g. Pretest/post-test
 - h. Teacher-designed tests of advanced student knowledge and/or skill
- 3. Interpretive/Subjective Assessment
 - a. Case study
 - b. Anecdotal records, documentation
 - c. Parent conferences with teacher, student to monitor and/or report progress/achievement
 - d. Mentor/Teacher conferences with student to monitor progress/achievement
 - e. Interviews
 - f. Learning logs or journals
 - g. Teacher/student narrative of learning
 - h. Written feedback from teacher to student/parent
 - i. Informal or formal staffing or child study conferences
- 4. Inventories, Rating Scales, Observation, or Matrices
 - a. Checklists
 - b. Inventories
 - c. Rating scales
 - d. Questionnaires
 - e. Surveys, appraisals
- 5. Self, Parent, Peer, Evaluation of Student Learning and/or Achievement

Staff Development and Support

Valentine Community Schools will endeavor to provide teachers and administrators awareness of the district-wide plan for high ability learners and an understanding of the characteristics of such students. Teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the program for high ability students will be provided training that will enable them to design and implement classroom experiences that utilize differentiation of curriculum and instruction, and to assess the work and progress of high ability learners.

Evaluation and Future Planning

The program will receive ongoing formative evaluation and be reviewed and evaluated yearly using quality indicators and illustrative criteria for both curriculum and student-based components. The purpose of the review will be to guide decision-making in present and future efforts in relation to maintaining or improving programming, comparing and selecting among several options or alternatives, and judging whether goals and objectives have been attained. The review may also include program strengths and weaknesses in the following areas

- Program design
- Student needs
- Learning environment
- Curriculum
- Student identification
- Personnel qualification
- Resources
- Communication
- Staff Development
- Cost effectiveness

The program will be revised based on the results of the yearly review. The evaluation plan and yearly review shall be available for review by interested persons upon request.

