

HIGH POTENTIAL PROGRAM RATIONALE AND PHILOSOPHY

RATIONALE

American educational philosophy provides that all students should have the same opportunity to receive an appropriate education. This suggests that school programs should be as individualized or as prescriptive as possible, in order to best accommodate the great range of abilities to be found in and among learners. It has long been known that individual students vary too much for any single instructional approach or strategy to be completely effective for all. The response to this reality has generally been the creation of supplemental or special programs for those whose characteristics in one way or another significantly depart from the norm.

Many educators, legislators, and parents have long been concerned that the learning opportunities provided for our most capable and/or creative students are inadequate. Inadequate in the sense that they do not sufficiently challenge or provide this group with opportunities for appropriate expression. They feel that programs designed for groups of students whose academic and nonacademic abilities are at the norm cannot adequately meet the needs of those individuals whose abilities are at an extreme, and that a better match is needed between the characteristics of these students and the nature of instructional programs provided for them.

In supporting these beliefs, there is an enormously large body of research which underscores the differences between average learners and those at the highest level of ability. Much of this research specifically demonstrates that high ability or exceptionally creative youngsters function better in, and learn far more from, programs which are geared to their level of learning, and which provide adequate competitive and interactive opportunities.

Following the lead of the United States Department of Education, the Minnesota State Legislature, and the Minnesota Department of Education, Anoka-Hennepin School District No. 11 is committed to make every reasonable effort to meet the special educational needs of all appropriately identified students of high potential. Such a commitment is to be carried out in a curricular program whose planning and operation will reflect a broad base of informed opinion, and which will be subject to regular evaluation and refinement.

PHILOSOPHY

In regard to the High Potential Program, Anoka-Hennepin School District No. 11 is committed to:

1. Provide a district-wide K-12 educational program which will enable each high potential student to develop his/her academic and nonacademic areas of potential to the fullest.
2. Encourage the emerging individuality of each student, while at the same time developing discipline and responsibility to self and to society.
3. Develop community awareness of the special abilities and needs of high potential students, and of the school district's program for these individuals.
4. Provide appropriate staff development for those teachers who will work either directly or indirectly with high potential students.

5. Develop a selection/identification system which is based on several appropriate criteria, one of which will be suitable testing, which will be consistent throughout the district and which will focus on single as well as multiple areas of special ability.
6. Develop an administrative design for the program which will be sufficiently uniform in the district to ensure consistency and fairness from school to school, and which will at the same time be flexible enough to accommodate some degree of local differences.

In conclusion, it is the intent of the School Board to establish suitable programming for high potential students as an integral part of the total educational process in Anoka-Hennepin School District No. 11. This programming will accommodate the needs of the high potential population within the district through the use of conventional as well as special instructional approaches. As in all cases, however, the development and operation of the program is contingent upon the availability of adequate resources. The development of special programming for high potential students exemplifies District No. 11's commitment to provide the best possible education for all students.

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Adopted February 1981