MCCSC Elementary High Ability Services (Spring 2023)

Throughout the MCCSC, students are provided with differentiated instruction and opportunities for acceleration. These opportunities are not restricted to students who are formally identified as high ability. Individual teachers and building principals work to develop the most appropriate educational experience possible for each child. These options may include grade level high ability cluster groups, subject skipping, flexible ability grouping for math and language arts, and inquiry-based instruction.

Grades K-2:
All MCCSC kindergarten students take the CogAT cognitive ability screener during second semester. Students scoring 75% or higher on the screener are then given the full CogAT battery. Students scoring in the 9th stanine on the full battery CogAT are identified as HA in ELA (verbal), Math (non-verbal/quantitative), or General Intellectual (all areas). Elementary schools offer program options for identified high ability students in grades K-2. These options may include grade level high ability cluster groups, subject grade skipping, flexible ability grouping for math and language arts, and inquiry-based instruction.

Grades 3-6: The program is expanding to include 3rd Grade for the 2023-24 school year.
The Accelerated Learning Program for Students (ALPS) offers academically and intellectually identified high ability third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students the opportunity to participate in academic activities and experiences in self-contained classes that are uniquely designed to provide the challenge and rigor they require. ALPS students complete grade-level requirements as well as appropriate enrichment and acceleration activities in all areas of the curriculum. ALPS students may have grade-level instruction with their age-level peers, including math, special area classes, and thematic curriculum. In their classes, ALPS students routinely engage in thematic reading and writing activities, are required to use critical thinking skills, and are encouraged to develop as independent, self-directed learners. Placement in the MCCSC elementary ALPS program requires formal high ability identification/recommendation by the high ability identification committee.

The ALPS classrooms will begin to transition to Fairview Elementary School with new students eligible for the high-ability program being placed at Fairview Elementary School for the 2023-2024 school year. No current ALPS student will be impacted by this three-year transitional change. Currently, ALPS serves students in Grades 4-6; however, a grade 3 classroom will be added for the 2023-2024 school year. Prospective ALPS students for Grades 3 and 4 for the 2023-2024 school year will be identified during spring of 2023. As part of this three-year transition, ALPS for Grades 3 and 4 will be at Fairview for the 2023-2024 school year, with ALPS continuing at Fairview Elementary School to include Grade 5 for the 2024-2025 school year and Grade 6 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Consistent with MCCSC transportation guidelines, transportation is provided to all ALPS students.
The challenges of the ALPS program require both students and their families to make a commitment of time and energy. Students and families who elect to participate in the program agree to work together to ensure that the student:

- Produces work of high quality and submitted on time
- Actively and meaningfully participates in class
- Participates for a full academic year in the assigned placement
- A continuous desire to work at a level above and beyond what is explicitly taught in the classroom

In addition to the self-contained ALPS classes in grades 3-6, individual elementary schools offer program options for identified high ability students. These options may include grade level high ability cluster groups, subject grade skipping, flexible ability grouping for math and language arts, and inquiry-based instruction.

Consideration for Elementary School ALPS and Other High Ability Services
In the 2022-23 school year, the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) was administered to all second-grade students and the InView cognitive abilities assessment was administered to all third-grade students in the MCCSC. Second and third-grade students also completed the NWEA growth-based achievement assessment during the 2022-23 school year. Based on CogAT or InView and NWEA assessment scores, students scoring in the 9th stanine, 96-99%, will be mailed an application packet inviting them to apply for possible placement in the elementary ALPS program. If your student is not formally identified as general intellectual high ability and is not sent an elementary ALPS application, they may also apply for placement in the ALPS program. Families interested in this opportunity should speak with their child’s teachers or principal and may contact the Office of High Ability Education. A specific identification/application timeline is available here.

Identification for Elementary School ALPS
A student’s potential to benefit from participation in the ALPS program is assessed through a variety of measures that are collected in individual application portfolios. The Office of High Ability Education stores portfolios for each student applicant. In addition to standardized test scores, the Coordinator of High Ability Education solicits the following to be included in the student’s portfolio.

Applicant provides:

- A completed Parent Referral Form (includes high ability behavior checklist)
- One example of the student’s written work that the student selects

School provides:

- Student writing sample from in class writing prompt
- Teacher Referral Form from the student’s current teacher(s) (includes high ability behavior checklist)
- Copies of report cards for first semester of current grade
- NWEA MAP Report

Selection of Elementary School ALPS Students
Members of the Elementary High Ability Identification Committee review each student portfolio to identify students who are most likely to benefit from participation in the ALPS program in elementary school. Participation in the elementary ALPS program requires a student be formally identified as general intellectual high ability by the identification committee. Members of the identification committee are experienced and licensed in gifted/talented education. Historically, students placed
in the elementary ALPS self-contained classes have achievement and cognitive verbal and nonverbal test scores in the 9th stanine, 96-99 percentiles.

A timeline for the elementary high ability identification process is provided each school year and will include parent meeting dates, the deadline for submission of application materials, and deadline for submitting appeals of placement recommendations. Notification of placement decisions will be sent to parents and schools. You may send the application materials electronically (msmith@mccsc.edu), by fax (812 330-7813), or drop them off/mail them to the MCCSC Administration Building located at 315 E North Drive, 47401.

**Alternative Admission to Elementary School ALPS**

Elementary school students who are new to the MCCSC or those who did not apply, did not qualify, or opted not to accept an invitation to the ALPS program can submit a portfolio for review by the High Ability Identification Committee during their third, fourth, and/or fifth grade years for the following school year. Alternative admission applications are considered by the Identification Committee at the end of the current school year. Placement is offered based on the recommendations of the High Ability Identification Committee.