

ACTUALIZING LEARNING PPOTENTIAL THROUGH HEIGHTENED AWARENESS

ALPHA

Southwest Allen County Schools
Programs for High Ability Learners:
A Continuum of Services



ALPHA CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

- ▶ Elementary (Grades 1-5) Self-Contained Program at Aboite Elementary
- ▶ Elementary (Grades K-5) Neighborhood Program at all schools
- ▶ Middle School (Grades 6-8) at both Middle Schools
- ▶ High School (grade 9-12) Honors, AP, PLTW, Dual Credit, Vocational

TERMS

- ▶ Ability refers to a student's natural talent
- ▶ This is measured **quantitatively** through tests such as the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test)
- ▶ Achievement refers to a student's proficiency in school subjects or content area
- ▶ This is measured **quantitatively** through tests such as NWEA and ISTEP+
- ▶ A **qualitative** test measures descriptions, perceptions and characteristics such as the Kingore Observation Scale (KOI) or The Scales for Identifying Gifted Children (SIGS)

IDENTIFICATION FOR SERVICES

- ▶ Identification at the elementary and middle levels is determined by student performance or achievement on NWEA and stanine scores obtained on the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test)
- ▶ Students who score in the 96thile in Language Arts and Math on the winter NWEA tests are identified to take the CogAT for initial eligibility into the district's self-contained program (Grades 1-5)
- ▶ Students scoring globally in the 9th stanine on the CogAT are identified and recommended to participate in the self-contained program at Aboite

IDENTIFICATION FOR SERVICES

- ▶ Students scoring globally in the 8th stanine are identified as high ability and receive services in their home schools (Grades 1-8)
- ▶ Students scoring in the 8th or 9th stanine within a specific area of the CogAT (verbal, nonverbal, quantitative) also receive services in their home schools (Grades 1-8)
- ▶ Students achieving in the 96th percentile in a specific content area of the NWEA tests in the fall (Reading, Language Arts, Math) are identified and receive services as part of the neighborhood program (Grades K-8)

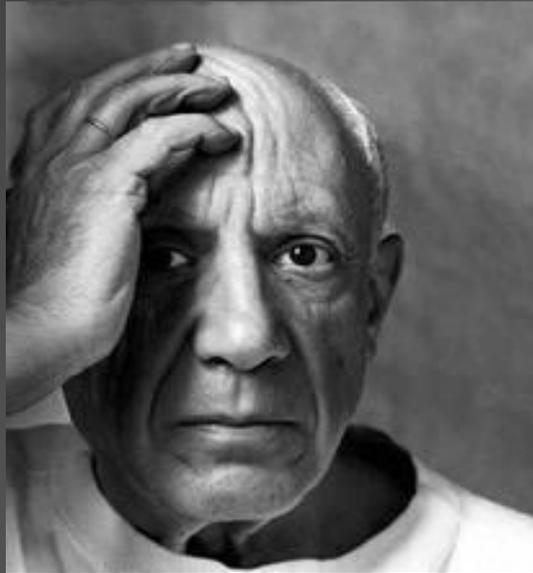
IDENTIFICATION FOR SERVICES

- ▶ Kindergarten students scoring in the 96thile in the fall and/or the gifted range of the KOI receive high ability services and take the CogAT in the spring to determine placement for the following school year
- ▶ All second grade students in SACS participate in CogAT testing in the spring
- ▶ The SIGS is used when additional information is necessary to determine the level of service needed (i.e. Global 8 and/or 8th and 9th stanine on battery of CogAT) ALPHA Committees in each building make this recommendation

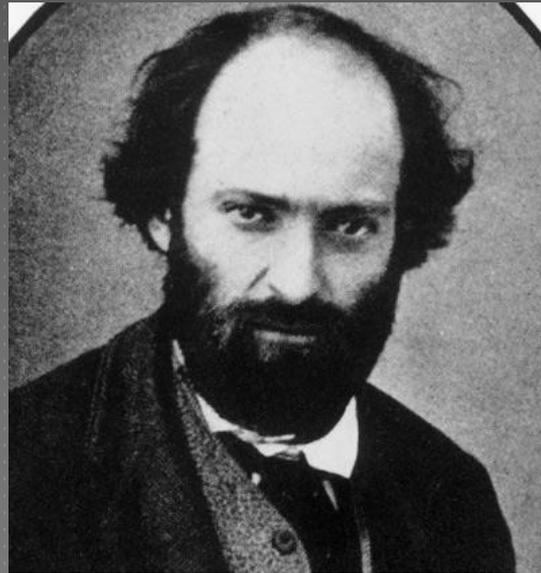
IDENTIFICATION FOR SERVICES

- ▶ At the high school level, students are identified through performance-based assessments, PSAT scores and qualitative data for enrollment in courses, distance learning opportunities and pathways to receive an Academic Honors Diploma
- ▶ Identification is a continuous process
- ▶ Students identified as high ability through the use of CogAT remain ALPHA students throughout their educational career in SACS
- ▶ Neighborhood ALPHA students are identified on a yearly basis

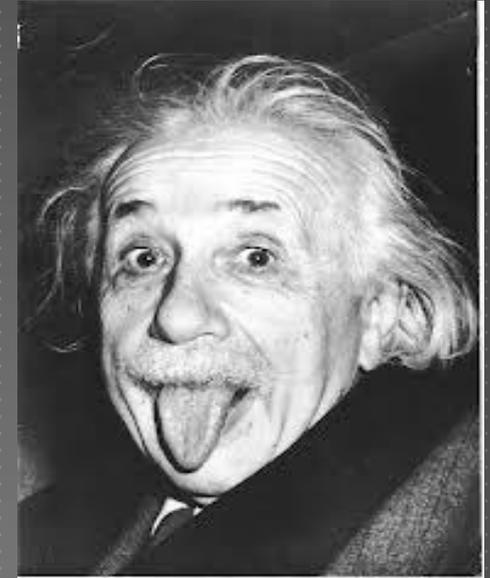
WHAT DOES GIFTED MEAN?



A Gifted Learner

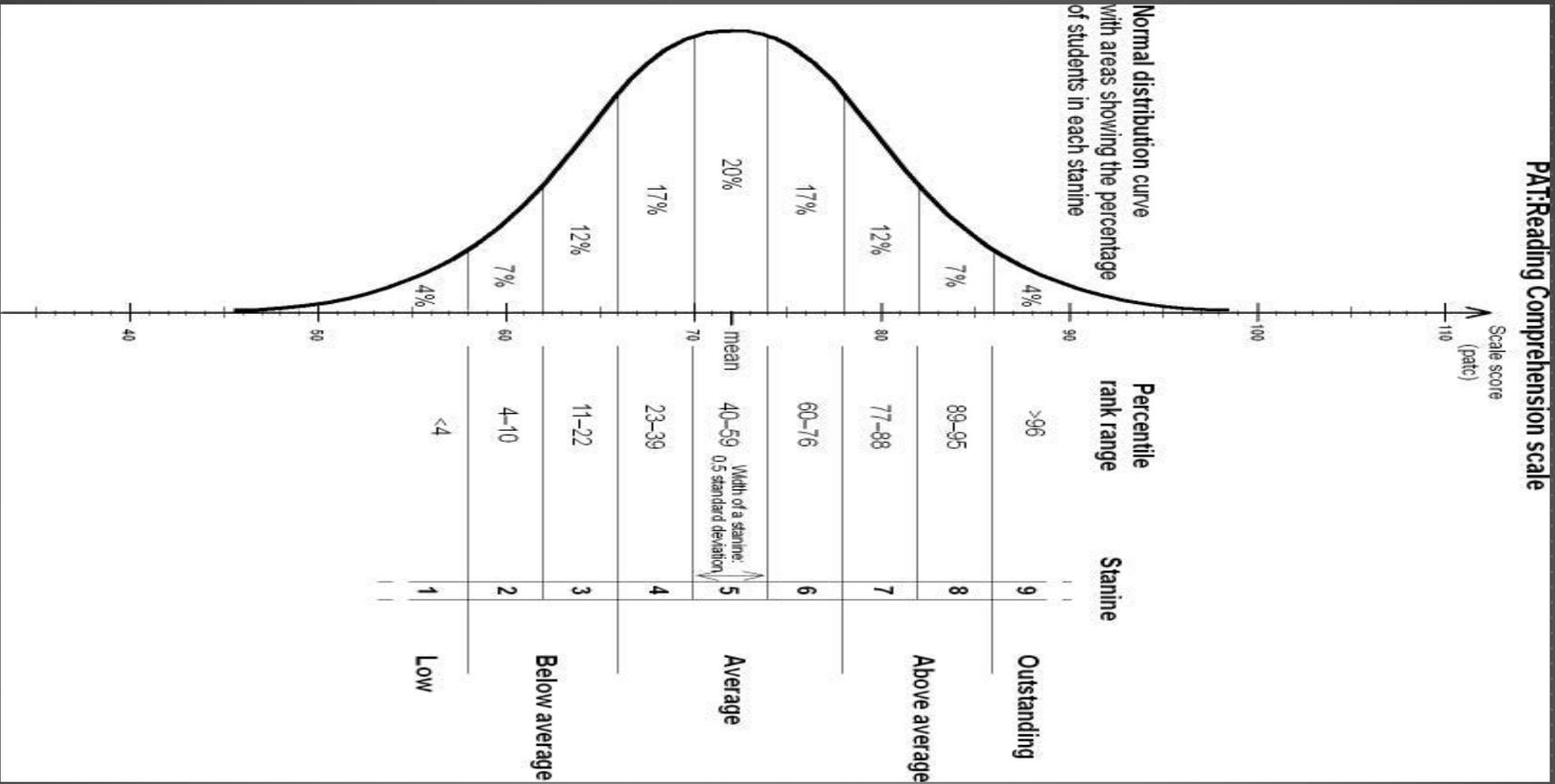


A High Achiever



A Creative Thinker

A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES





ALPHA

**Neighborhood schools
SACS curriculum
individualized and
differentiated for high
ability students**

**Self-Contained Program at
Aboite Elementary with
gifted education curriculum
able to address unique
academic and social needs**

ELEMENTARY SERVICES

- ▶ Curriculum is based upon the IDOE's adopted academic standards for each subject and/or content area
- ▶ The IDOE English/Language Arts High Ability Units are being used in the self-contained program
- ▶ Instructional strategies for all ALPHA students can include differentiation within the classroom, leveled reading groups, flexible grouping, cluster grouping, guided math, additional enrichment, projects, curriculum compacting, independent learning, student-driven inquiry, etc

ELEMENTARY SERVICES

- ▶ Counseling and guidance plan for students is framed after the IDOE's recommendations for guiding students with high abilities specific to social and emotional considerations
- ▶ Our goal is to address the social and emotional needs of students through peer interaction and fostering a sense of community
- ▶ Parents and teacher working together is crucial
- ▶ SACS believes parents are a child's first teacher and should work in concert with teachers and their student(s) to understand and nurture the gifts of each individual child

ELEMENTARY SERVICES

- ▶ Professional development for teachers has included monthly sessions facilitated by ALPHA teachers on various topics related to curriculum and instruction specific to high ability students (5 were offered last year)
- ▶ February inservice included sessions specific to instructional and motivational strategies
- ▶ Self-contained ALPHA teacher serves on each other school's ALPHA Committee and serve as liaisons and resources for that school

MIDDLE SCHOOL SERVICES

- ▶ Curriculum is based upon the IDOE's adopted academic standards for each subject and/or content area
- ▶ Instructional strategies for all ALPHA students can include differentiation within the classroom, leveled reading groups, flexible grouping, cluster grouping, guided math, additional enrichment, projects, curriculum compacting, independent learning, student-driven inquiry, etc.
- ▶ Honors classes for E/LA, Math, Social Studies and Science

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MIDDLE SCHOOL SERVICES

- ▶ Professional development topics at all levels is identified by leadership teams and principals that are specific to students' academic needs
- ▶ These are opportunities strategically designed to address and discuss the specific academic, emotional and social needs of individual students or groups of students through research in best practices
- ▶ Topics specific to high ability have included the accurate identification of students within the high ability domains, classroom planning, levels of service, talent development and the development of independent projects of study.

HIGH SCHOOL SERVICES

- ▶ Emphasis is on achievement
 - ▶ Honors classes
 - ▶ Advanced Placement Courses
 - ▶ Dual Credit Courses
 - ▶ Project Lead the Way (PLTW)
 - ▶ Vocational Opportunities
 - ▶ Distance Learning Opportunities
 - ▶ Independent Projects (i.e. Mentorship Program)
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HIGH SCHOOL SERVICES

- ▶ Professional development topics at all levels is identified by leadership teams and principals that are specific to students' academic needs
- ▶ Curriculum Coordinators have identified Vertical Articulation Teams (VAT) in the four core content areas as well as World Language to develop an aligned, viable curriculum in grades 6-12 including Honors, AP, Dual Credit, etc.
- ▶ Common assessments give us an opportunity to reflect upon our professional practices and evaluate programs to ensure improved academic achievement

FACTS

- ▶ Indiana law defines a student as qualifying in ability OR achievement
- ▶ Testing children under the age of ten is notoriously unreliable
- ▶ Indiana law requires identification of Kindergarten students with services provided
- ▶ Research indicates at some point achievement trumps ability which is why the high school focus is on achievement and a growth mindset

ALPHA IN SACS

- ▶ SACS is fortunate to be able to offer our high ability students such an extensive program
 - ▶ There is no IDOE requirement regarding high ability license
 - ▶ It is SACS policy that a teacher hired as a Self-Contained ALPHA teacher obtain their high ability license within 3 years of hire
 - ▶ SACS does participate in the High Ability grant application process each year
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ALPHA IN SACS

- ▶ It is the IDOE's intent that grant funds be used to support K-12 high ability programming
- ▶ Grant funds support the partial salary of one ALPHA teacher
- ▶ SACS goes above and beyond to ensure our students are a priority and that a continuum of services is available through additional high ability staffing allocations
- ▶ SACS remains committed to offering a continuum of high ability services including the self-contained program

THANK YOU

Preparing today's
learners for
tomorrow's
opportunities.