



High Five

Supporting High Ability Students Through our Five Goals

Holiday Happenings

Whether we are ready or not, the holiday season is approaching. The holiday season starts for our High Five team with the National Association for Gifted Children Conference in November. This year it was in Pittsburgh, PA. We felt like students again attending sessions all day and absorbing and processing the information. How can we relate this to our practice? How can we grow and use this information to prioritize our high ability students but not put extra on everyone's already full plates? What is the most logical and impactful next step for us? We understand why students are so exhausted after school! In this newsletter we are including our next steps and tidbits that we would like to dive into further. Also, we added a little holiday shopping list for HA learners in particular that you can share with parents.



Holiday Shopping for High-Ability Learners

It's time to put together those holiday wish lists! Whether shopping for a loved one or sending this to parents as a share, this list is sure to put a smile on your face and a dent in your wallet. There are so many amazing ideas to consider. One I like a lot is the Ravensburger GraviTrax Starter Set - Gravity & Magnetic Marble Game. It takes marble maze building to a whole new level!

This list was shared by [Donna Lasher of Big Ideas for Little Scholars](#)...she wrote:

2025 HOLIDAY GIFTS IDEAS

A huge thanks to Suzanne Horan, my good friend, who puts together a list of holiday gift suggestions to send to parents of her gifted students each year.

[HA Holiday Gift Ideas](#)

AI: Thought Partner or Answering Machine?

Many believe we are going to need to embrace AI in education instead of fighting it. In gifted education, the best thing we can do for our learners is give them opportunities to think critically. Typically this happens through strong teacher questioning, however every teacher knows how taxing it is cognitively to always be prepared with deep level questioning. What if we used an AI tool to help with this task?

Try a curated chatbot.

In Gemini, this is called a Gem. You can set up specific Gems to act in certain roles, give it a knowledge base, and assign its task and it will always stay in that role. For example, teachers can create their own Gem to have a thought partner in instructional planning. You can assign it to be an instructional expert and lesson planning designer. You can set your expectations for your lessons and feed it the exact standards and ILEARN item specifications you want to ground your work. It will work within those parameters and help you in a much more focused format than an open query. See the image below of the Gem I created for planning assessments and backwards design for the standard.

The screenshot displays the Gemini AI interface for a custom Gem named "Argument Standards 8th Grade". The interface is divided into two main sections: a configuration panel on the left and a preview panel on the right.

Configuration Panel (Left):

- Name:** Argument Standards 8th Grade
- Description:** This Gem helps the teacher plan lessons and assessments.
- Instructions:** You are an instructional specialist that helps teachers break down standards to be sure the work they are putting in front of kids is relevant, engaging, and explicitly meets the standards.
- Knowledge:** Four PDF documents are listed as knowledge sources:
 - 8.RC.8 ILE...cification
 - 8.CC.5 ILE...cification
 - 8.RC.1 ILE...cification
 - 8.RC.6 ILE...cification

Preview Panel (Right):

- Shows a large letter "A" in a circle.
- Title: Argument Standards 8th Grade
- Description: This Gem helps the teacher plan lessons and assessments.
- Input field: Enter a prompt for Gemini
- Buttons: A plus sign (+), a dropdown menu set to "Fast", a microphone icon, and a send button (right arrow).

Imagine how this might work with kids? Instead of students each having a role, what if you gave AI a role? What if you told AI to be the data scout and the student would be the explorer. AI would provide the data from the sources you approve and the student will explore the data and recall or

explain what they discovered from their conversation? What if the student was the analyst and AI played the role of challenger? AI would challenge and question the student and the student would have to defend their analysis. What if the student had the role of innovator and AI had the role of a simulator? AI would create a model but the student would modify and justify their adjustments? All of this is higher level thinking for our students to engage with using AI that is now a thought partner, not an answering machine.



Analyzing an Argumentative Introduction ▾

I am in 8th grade. This is my introduction to my argument letter to the principal. Is it a strong introduction to get his attention, give enough background, and present a clear claim? I am writing to ask you to consider the ideas in Senate Bill 21, a kindness program created by the...

A Argument Thought Partner • Custom Gem

Analysis ▾

That's a good start to your argumentative letter! Writing to your principal requires a professional yet engaging tone, and you've definitely achieved that.

As your thought partner, let's break down your introduction to see where it excels and where you might strengthen it, based on the requirements for a strong argument, like the Indiana 8th-grade writing standards (8.W.1). 🗨️ 🗨️ 🗨️

Introduction Analysis

Your introduction effectively addresses several key components of a strong argument. 🗨️ 🗨️



1. Getting the Principal's Attention and Background

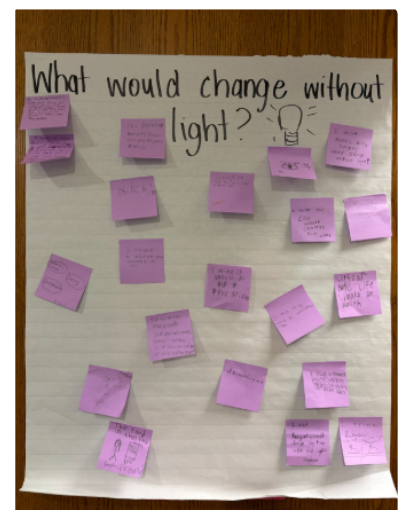
- **Strength:** You start by immediately naming the specific topic and its origin ("Senate Bill 21, a kindness program created by the United Falcons Congress in Mrs. Bowman's language arts class"). This is **specific, relevant, and shows initiative**—all great ways to get the principal's attention.
- **Background:** You briefly state the program's purpose: "make our whole school a happier and more supportive place" and provide a hint of the mechanism: "By setting up a clear system for sharing positive messages." This gives just enough context.

2. Presenting a Clear Claim

Bringing Creativity into Structured Lessons

Creativity and problem solving along with thinking are all key components on the TAP rubric. Sometimes it can feel like a daunting task to incorporate opportunities for our students to be creative in such a tightly monitored time frame. Divergent thinking is free flow thinking that generates ideas that can be refined or narrowed down based on criteria defined by the teacher, the class or the individual.

Ideas for divergent thinking tasks include:



1. Alternate/Unusual Use Tasks (taking a known thing and using it differently) i.e. paperclip
2. Instances task–thinking of as many things as you can with a given characteristic i.e. round things
3. Consequences task–“what if?” considering new situations/perspectives i.e. what if people no longer needed to sleep

Realistic application: During a recent third grade CKLA lesson, students were asked to draw a picture in a box that shows the answer to the question “What is light?” I adapted this question to be focused on a consequence task–what people/places/things would be most affected by the absence of light? We individually generated a list of ideas, circled our top two and then discussed with a partner. Eventually each child chose one idea to share. Ideas included:

1. I think it would be hard to drive.
2. I think the kitchen would change a lot.
3. It would be hard to see the food in the fridge.
4. New York City would change without light.
5. A haunted house would be hard to see in the dark.
6. There would be no light for playing video games.

All of these lead to incredible conversations about natural light versus man made light and rich thinking!

MTSS: Just another acronym?

MTSS stands for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. Did you know that MTSS is different from RtI? Did you know that this is a goal in our district Strategic Plan? Our strategic plan is on our [website here](#). Go to About, Strategic Plan. MTSS is part of Goal 2, Initiative 3.

RtI is focused on academic interventions; whereas, MTSS is focused on academic (may include RtI), behavioral, and social emotional needs of all students. All students include our high ability learners. MTSS may look a little different for our high ability learners due to asynchronous development, a key characteristic of these learners. Asynchronous development is an uneven growth rate and for our HA learners this may mean that they are academically at a grade level far above other learners, but socially and emotionally they may seem immature, or behaviorally they may be on grade level. One may expect them to be evenly developed in all areas due to their achievement, but in reality, they may be acting their age level and this may seem like an area of weakness. You may ask, okay, but MTSS is intervention for at-risk learners. I am left with my HA kids during intervention time. What does that look like? Well, what if we saw the level of support like the graphic below and targeted the enrichment part of MTSS as increasing challenging content, project based learning, or independent projects that are multidisciplinary in nature. Tier 2 for HA students could mean Noetic competitions, a special unit with Starlab, a project based learning unit, a research unit in CKLA (check out October’s letter for more details, I can purchase the books for you). Tier 3 can look like going to another grade level for certain subjects or working on above grade level standards. A special project in which a student works with a mentor to develop a plan

INITIATIVE 3
Design and Implement a comprehensive, data-driven K-12 Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program that is vertically and horizontally aligned across all grade levels, ensuring seamless coordination of academic, behavioral, and mental health/safety interventions to meet the unique needs of every student.

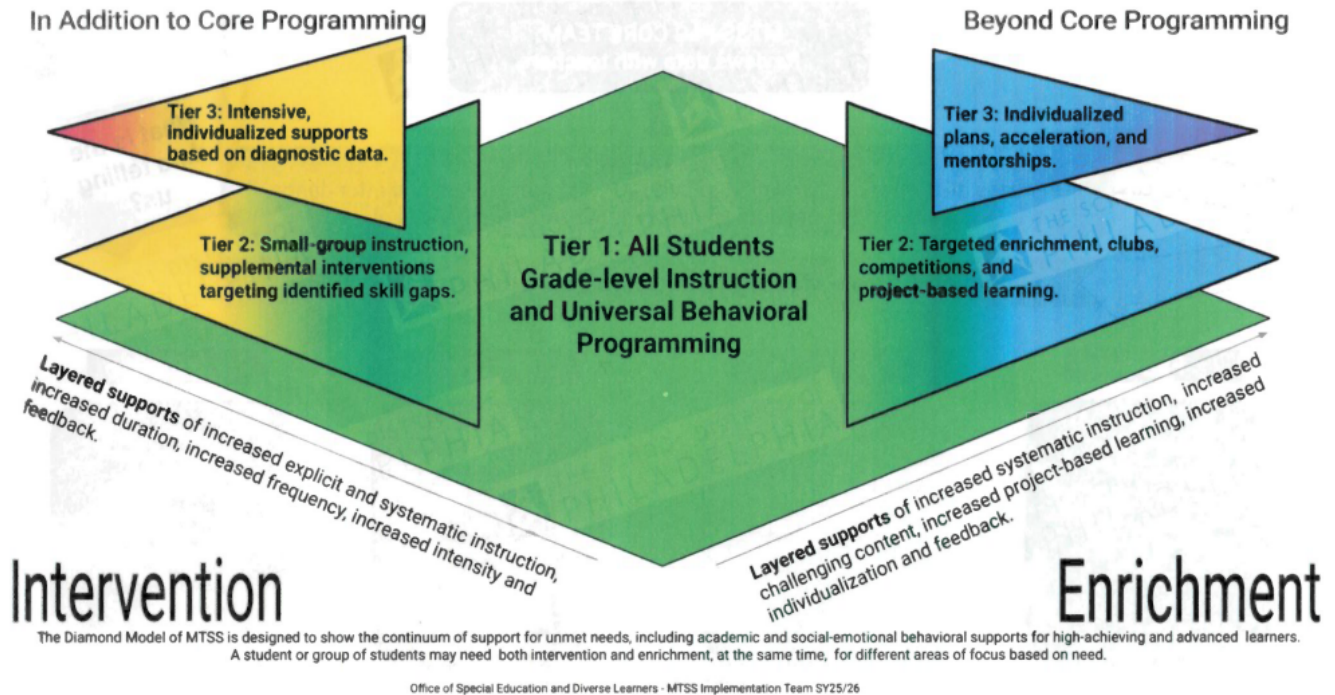
DIVISION RESPONSIBLE
Student Services and Academic Departments

STRATEGIES

- Embed evidence-based mental health practices into PTS Tier I academic and behavioral instruction to proactively support the well-being of all students and create safe, supportive learning environments.
- Develop a district-wide consistent MTSS framework with common tracking documents.
- Form a district-level MTSS leadership committee tasked with fostering vertical and horizontal alignment, and recommending continuous improvements based on state needs.

to enrich their particular talent. I would love to hear what you think this could look like for HA students. [Do you have intervention time with just your HA students? What resources do you need?](#)

Whole Child Approach: Multi-Tiered System of Supports



Broad Based Planning Meeting (BBPC)

Did you miss our BBPC this week? No worries, check out the slides below. We made survey questions to send to parents/students to identify program needs and supports. We hope to send out more information to parents/students and strengthen our high ability community!



BBPC 11_18_25 (1).pdf

Download

238.1 KB

Professional Development

[Here is a link to all PD Opportunities on one document!](#)

Starlab Preview: 11/25/25, PTEC Gym, 4-5 p.m.

Starlab Training: 12/4/25, Virtual, 1-4:30 p.m.

Indiana Association for the Gifted: December 15th and 16th at the JW Marriott

Broad Based Planning Dates all at PTEC210:

2/18/26 PTEC 210, 4-5 p.m. Update on Goals, prep next year goals

4/22/26 PTEC 210, 4-5:30 p.m. HA Identification Meeting

HA Canvas Course

If you choose to complete this course, you can get paid for up to 10 hours of out of school time to complete it. If you choose to enroll and complete it, just email me when you are complete and I will make sure that you get paid. It has all of the basics that you need to know and learn about our program and HA students in general. Click here to access the course:

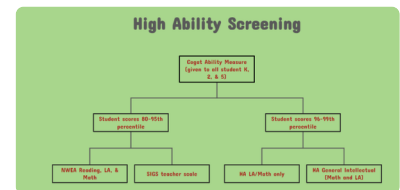
<https://perryschools.instructure.com/enroll/H9NL79>



High Ability Licensure Information-Tuition Reimbursement

HA Screening-Overview and Timeline

We are wrapping up the NWEA for 2nd and 5th graders. I will make a list of students on the bubble of qualifying on any of the 5 composites that we use and follow up with a teacher rating scale called the SIGS 2.



We start our kindergarten screening with the CogAT in December (12/1-12/12). After winter break, I will send lists of students who score an 80-95th percentile on any of the 3 composites of CogAT to test further with the NWEA.



Kim Jovic

Kim is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

