High Five: October 2025

Supporting HA Students Through our Five Goals

Focusing on Curiosity and Wonder

I hope that you had a great Fall Break and had the time to get centered and focused for the rest of the Fall semester. I hope that you found some curiosity and wonder in your day whether it was from traveling to a new location of natural beauty or taking the time to actually look at your daily environment and wonder how it all connects. That is something that we want to spark in our students: to make them curious, lifelong learners. One of our HA student program goals is to develop advanced study skills to become independent and interactive learners grappling with increasingly complex content. This newsletter focuses on some opportunities to help support students to become more interactive learners and increase critical and creative thinking.

Starlab

I am very excited to announce that Perry Township Schools now has a Starlab!

Our students at Fall Intersession at Burkhart Elementary were the first to experience this Starlab in person. Jeanetta Penniston and Suzie Ayler were flexible and supportive and we successfully set the Starlab up and had 6 groups of 20-30 students in the Starlab on the last day of intersession. Suzie made connections to stations that they visited about constellations and myths that have been formed to help us understand the sky. We loved hearing the squeals of wonder from the students. I am so glad that we dived into giving this a try!

We not only purchased the astronomy package, but we also purchased geology! The Starlab aligns to many units in our CKLA curriculum. My vision is to use this Starlab with HA students to help them to bring their research alive while experiencing the curriculum and aligning a passion project with the lab.

The Starlab comes with a curriculum to use. We have a training on December 4th (Thursday) from 1-4:30 p.m. and it is virtual. The training goes over set up, tear down, and curriculum. I would love some representatives from secondary as well to help us use the Starlab. I want to use this as

much as we can to give the students real world experiences, and I will not be able to be at all of the schools if we use this widely. I will also need some support when I am at schools.

The sky is not the limit here! Starlab is open source, so you can project anything with "full dome" on Youtube. Also, if you have a GoPro, a student can record the night sky or a geological formation on a trip and project and present it in the Starlab. Let's make this great and our own. This is now ours for years to come! There is no subscription cost. We just have to take really great care of it and may have to replace the computer down the line, but that is it!

Let me know if you are interested in being a trained Starlab teacher

Curiosities and Puzzlements

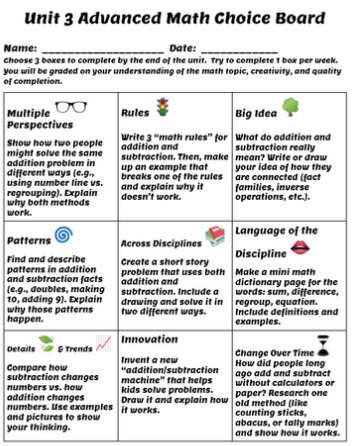
Looking for a quick, informal way to incorporate curiosity stems into your day? Check out Ian Byrd's weekly email entitled Puzzlements. Subscribe by clicking here! This week's email included a video on carving turnips instead of pumpkins, Halloween candy art and a time lapse video of a pumpkin growing!

He explains his rationale behind the Puzzlements here and gives ideas for how to incorporate them into your classroom. My favorite part of using the Puzzlements is being able to model wonder right alongside my students as the links certainly create all sorts of opportunities for questions. The simple questions "What do you notice?" and "What do you wonder?" will help unleash a level of curiosity in your students that is safe and low pressure.

Math Choice with Depth and Complexity

Question: What should I do if I think my high-ability students have already mastered the skills in a math unit?

Answer: Begin by giving those students a pre-assessment. The simplest approach is to use the end-of-unit test before starting instruction. The results will help you see whether students have already mastered the content or if they would still benefit from participating in parts of the unit. This ensures your instruction is targeted and that students are appropriately challenged.
Question: What should I do with students who perform well on the pre-assessment?



Unit 3 Advanced Math Choice Board

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Choose 3 boxes to complete by the end of the unit. Try to complete 1 box per week. You will be graded on your understanding of the math topic, creativity, and quality of completion.

Multiple Perspectives *Show how two people might solve the same addition problem in different ways (e.g., using number line vs. regrouping). Explain why both methods work.*	**Rules** *Write 3 "math rules" for addition and subtraction. Then, make up an example that breaks one of the rules and explain why it doesn't work.*	**Big Idea** *What do addition and subtraction really mean? Write or draw your idea of how they are connected (fact families, inverse operations, etc.).*
Patterns *Find and describe patterns in addition and subtraction facts (e.g., doubles, making 10, adding 9). Explain why those patterns happen.*	**Across Disciplines** *Create a short story problem that uses both addition and subtraction. Include a drawing and solve it in two different ways.*	**Language of the Discipline** *Make a mini math dictionary page for the words: sum, difference, regroup, equation. Include definitions and examples.*
Details & Trends *Compare how subtraction changes numbers vs. how addition changes numbers. Use examples and pictures to show your thinking.*	**Innovation** *Invent a new "addition/subtraction machine" that helps kids solve problems. Draw it and explain how it works.*	**Change Over Time** *How did people long ago add and subtract without calculators or paper? Research one old method (like counting sticks, abacus, or tally marks) and show how it works.*

Answer: Students who demonstrate mastery on the pre-assessment should be provided with opportunities for enrichment or curriculum compacting rather than repeating material they already know. Consider the following strategies:

- Curriculum Compacting: Skip lessons covering mastered skills and offer advanced or extension tasks.
- Enrichment Projects: Provide real-world applications, open-ended problems, or creative challenges that extend their learning.
- Depth and Complexity Prompts: Encourage exploration of patterns, connections, multiple strategies, and deeper mathematical reasoning.
- Acceleration: Allow students to move ahead to future units or higher-level standards when appropriate.

The goal is to keep these learners engaged, challenged, and growing rather than repeating content they've already mastered.

In a second-grade unit on **addition and subtraction**, I've adjusted instruction to meet the needs of my **high-ability students**. Instead of completing the full set of lessons, these students are focusing on developing and practicing **two-digit addition and subtraction** skills. While I provide direct instruction to the rest of the class, the high-ability group works independently or collaboratively on a **choice board** designed to promote deeper thinking and application of these skills.
All students continue to complete **math boxes** to maintain skill practice and review. My high-ability students also occasionally complete selected **math journal pages** that reinforce key concepts or extend learning.
For students who demonstrate partial mastery or need targeted instruction on specific lessons, I offer **mini-lessons** or pull them into the main math group for focused support. This flexible approach ensures that every student receives instruction aligned with their readiness level while remaining engaged and challenged throughout the unit.

Click on the link below to access the choice board.

Math Choice with Depth and Complexity

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Professional Development

IMPORTANT DATES

Here is a link to all PD Opportunities on one document!

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:
11/19/25 PTEC 210, 4-5 p.m. Prep to send Parent Input survey

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 10 hours (updated!) 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 CogAT for 2nd and 5th graders. I will send the list of students to each building that scored an 80th-95th percentile on one of the Composite scores of Verbal, Quantitative, or Quantitative Nonverbal for NWEA. That will be given 11/10-11/25/25. We are giving this test to 2nd grade only. We will use ILEARN Checkpoint percentile rankings to identify our 5th graders. This will help us to save instructional time and test less. The DOE allows us to use this formative assessment to identify students in achievement. I will share the electronic and paper CogAT profile information with building administrators to be shared with teachers after Fall Break.

We start our kindergarten screening with the CogAT in December (12/1-12/12).

Research Units in CKLA

You should have access to Research Units in CKLA. We met with Melissa Browning and thought that these would be great options for a differentiated project for HA students during WIN time. Take a look at your grade level project. How could this be implemented in your classroom or

school? Let your HA representative know if you are interested in piloting the unit for us to see if it is something that we should implement district wide. We can purchase the books with our HA Grant.

Kim Jovic

Kim is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters