

High Five: January 2026

Supporting HA Students Through our Five Goals

Happy 2026

The start of 2026 has been tumultuous to say the least, but let's try to get into a positive mindset to be the best advocate for our students and families. This newsletter will give you tidbits from our IAG Conference in December. Starlab information, and CKLA research unit resources.

Starlab Reservation System

We purchased a Starlab for Perry Township with the goal of using it to enrich curriculum with high ability students in particular. It is available for use with all students though! We had representatives from a few schools go through training with it. A trained person is needed to put it up, take it down, and train others for use. Here is the calendar to reserve it below . Before you reserve it, please check with your HA building rep to see if someone from your building was present at the training and coordinate dates with them as well, just in case I am not able to be at your building the whole time that you are using it.



[Starlab Reservation Calendar](#)

We used it at Burkhart for intersession. I used it with a preschool class as well. We first pointed out constellations that the students studied, then showed a movie about exploring the moon. There is a wonderful curriculum that accompanies the Starlab (Astronomy called Starry Night AND Geology called Layered Earth), it tells you exactly what to click and say, but it takes some getting used to. That is the stage that we are in now.

If you reserve the lab, reserve it one day prior than when you would want to use it. The program is only on the computer, it is an app. That would give us at least a day to plan what you would want to do with the students. Grounds will deliver the equipment to each building in the gym or designated area (approved by Kim Jovic) that you put on the calendar invite (add it to the location).

Indiana Association for the Gifted

We had a group of 13 educators who prioritized our gifted students and attended the Indiana Association for the Gifted in December. Lisa van Gemert was the keynote and held many sessions on Depth and Complexity, creativity, and advocacy. She is a co-author of a book that we have studied, the Gifted Guild's Guide to Depth and Complexity. I have many copies of this book in my office, so please let me know if you would like one. One of our very own, Nina Bowman (PMMS), was honored by the Friend of the Gifted Award for her advocacy and support of gifted students in our district and beyond! We will include takeaways and resources from that conference throughout our newsletters this year.



Resource-O-Rama

At IAG, Keynote Speaker Lisa Van Gemert, also known as the Gifted Guru, presented many resources that might spark curiosity and/or differentiate for our gifted kids. Below is a resource that stood out to me.

Bingo Baker - This simple site allowed me to create and print many different bingo cards. I added my own concepts or my own images. The free version only allows me to print 8 different cards but the kids can play online and I can give each kid their own version of the bingo board. Most recently, I reviewed concepts from our argument unit and kids collaborated at their tables to play. It was a big win for thinking and collaboration in my gifted class! I loved it so much I bought the paid version and am now a bingo baker for life!



A-High Achiever

ARTICLES FOR EDUCATORS & PARENTS High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker Kingore, B. (2004). Differentiation: Simplified, realistic, and effective. Austin: P. A. Publishing. Identification of gifted students is clouded when concerned adults misinterpret high achievement as giftedness. High-achieving students are noticed for their on-time, neat, well-developed, and correct learning products. Adults comment on these students' consistent high [...]

📄 kingore.com

HA Parent/Student Input Survey

Through our Broad Based Planning Committee process, we built a parent and student survey that consists of 10 questions total about identification, curriculum, social/emotional support, and resources that parents and students need. We will use this information to form parent resources and hopefully hold a parent night in the future! Here is what was sent to parents in case you get any questions about it. The survey was sent out January 20th.

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This is a survey for our District High Ability program to help develop our program and form resources and support for parents and students. This survey will take less than 7 minutes. The first 5 questions are for you to answer and the last 5 questions are for your student(s) to answer. Please complete the survey by Friday, January 30th. If you have any questions, please reach out to me by email: kjovic@percyschools.org.

The survey is available here: <https://forms.gle/1H489n9L732n5e99>

Sincerely,
Kim Jovic
Director of Testing and High Ability

Interested in Project Based Learning & Depth and Complexity?

Executive Functioning in High-Ability Students: Building Organization and Focus for Long-Term Success

High-ability students are often perceived as naturally organized, focused, and independent learners. While many demonstrate advanced reasoning, creativity, and academic skills, strong intellectual ability does not automatically translate into strong executive functioning. In fact, gifted and high-ability students frequently struggle with organization, attention, planning, and task completion – skills essential for success in school and life. Understanding how executive functioning impacts high-ability learners allows educators to better support their growth, prevent frustration, and help them reach their full potential.

What Is Executive Functioning?

Executive functioning refers to the brain-based skills that help students:

- Plan and prioritize tasks
- Organize materials and thoughts
- Manage time
- Focus and sustain attention
- Monitor progress
- Regulate emotions and impulses

These skills act as the “manager” of learning – directing how students approach work, solve problems, and complete responsibilities. For high-ability students, executive functioning often develops unevenly. A child may read years above grade level yet forget assignments, lose papers, struggle to start tasks, or become overwhelmed by multi-step projects. This gap is sometimes called **asynchronous development** – advanced cognitive ability paired with still-developing self-management skills.

The Role of Note-Taking in Executive Functioning

Note-taking is one of the most powerful tools for building organization and focus – especially for high-ability students.

Effective note-taking helps students:

- Identify key ideas
- Organize information logically
- Stay engaged during instruction
- Strengthen memory and comprehension
- Break large concepts into manageable parts

However, many students are never explicitly taught how to take notes.

For gifted learners, unstructured note-taking can lead to:

- Writing everything (no prioritizing)
- Writing nothing (overwhelmed by what matters)
- Disorganized pages
- Difficulty reviewing later

Examples of note sheets used in 2nd-grade CKLA

[Life Cycle of a Butterfly Notes](#)

[Water Cycle Notes](#)

[life cycle of chicken notes](#)

Professional Development

IMPORTANT DATES 📅

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

NAGC Online Teacher Summit:

2/10 and 2/11, Online, 11-4:30 p.m.

Broad Based Planning Dates all at PTEC210:

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

HA Identification Meeting:

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

Gifted Guru Depth and Complexity:

Virtual at your own pace, Online

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 finished the CogAT for Kindergarten. The NWEA for kindergarten starts 3/2-3/13/26. The lists of students who scored an 80-95th percentile on Verbal, Quantitative, and/or Quant/Nonverbal are complete and will be sent out in a couple of weeks.

Our 2nd graders took the NWEA in November. I will be following up by sending teacher scales to teachers of students who are on the bubble of qualifying in February. This scale is called the SIGS-2 and you will get an email in your inbox if you have a student who meets this criteria.

Research Units in CKLA

You 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. I have ordered each grade level set and have them here at PTEC. [Here](#) is a document with the ReadWorks articles cited in each unit. Lori Williams developed this helpful resource and we are adding other independent station resources that go with the units. If you have ideas to add to this document, please let me know. It is a work in progress.

| CKLA Research Units - ReadWorks Articles | |
|---|---|
| 2nd Grade: Up, Up, and Away: The Age of Aviation | |
| ReadWorks Articles: | |
| Lesson 3 | The Amazing Flying Machine |
| Lesson 11 | Overcoming Barriers: Amelia Earhart |
| 3rd Grade: All That Jazz | |
| ReadWorks Articles: | |
| Lesson 2 | Jazz |
| Lesson 2 | The Harlem Renaissance |
| Lesson 3 | Louis Armstrong |
| Lesson 3 | Falling for Jazz |

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Kim Jovic

Kim is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters