

Digging Deeper: Students with a History of Higher Achievement Questions at the School Level

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NOTE: Individuals are listed in the roles and organizations in which they were located at the time this resource was developed.

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Note:

This document specifically addresses the needs of higher achieving students. While many of the examples referenced may address the needs of students with GIEPs, it is important to remember that there are many students with a history of higher achievement, including, but not limited to regular and special education students, students with IEPs, English Learners, and students who are economically disadvantaged.

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Digging Deeper: Students with a History of Higher Achievement

SYSTEM (District/School) Level Questions

This Digging Deeper Guide focuses on all students with a history of higher achievement, including, but not limited to students with GIEPs. The purpose of this supplemental *Digging Deeper* guide is to provide data teams with specific variables in CIAO (curriculum, instruction, assessment, and organization) relative to the needs of students with histories of higher achievement, for the purpose of determining root cause(s) to guide current planning strategies.

This document can be helpful when used in conjunction with the *Digging Deeper into Content Areas* documents, available in Math/Algebra I, ELA/Keystone Literature, and Science/Keystone Biology. These documents can be accessed by clicking on the Digging Deeper link found on the [PVAAS login page](#).

Effective use of this guide requires collaborative reflection on the variables, and responses to the variables with evidence (rather than a “yes” or “no”). This guide is not a checklist. Rather, it is a listing of issues to explore more deeply, and requires careful selection of where to start and how deeply to probe, discussion about evidence of practice, and honest reflection. The focus and starting point are dependent on the school’s current status and needs. Each question is to be considered and answered with solid evidence.

Note: Each question indicates the related domain(s) from The Framework for Teaching:

PP=Planning and Preparation

CE=Classroom Environment

I=Instruction

PR=Professional Responsibility

Where to Start

It is not necessary to ask all of the questions at one time. Schools may find it more effective to start with a few key questions from each section (Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Organization) to ensure solid, core foundational practices are established in all areas. The information below highlights variables that are typically indicative of high priority variables, or starting points, for discussing foundational variables in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and organization. Using these questions as starting points may prove helpful in designing and implementing practices that are high impact for students with a history of higher achievement, beginning with those that are foundational building blocks. It is suggested to keep this in mind as you review all variables and questions in this guide.

Suggested Prioritization of Key Questions

Highest priority variables are suggested as a possible starting point for a digging deeper discussion. It is important to note that the questions below are merely suggestions. These are NOT the only possible questions to use as a starting point, and they are NOT intended to be a prescribed order to follow. Each LEA must determine their starting point, i.e., which questions/variables to explore. The starting point and the subsequent choices of which variables to explore is dependent on the context of the LEA/school and what the LEA/school’s data indicate.

CURRICULUM

Start with:

C-1. Does the written curriculum address higher levels of cognition as described in Webb's Depth of Knowledge (Level 3 and 4)? Is it analyzed on an on-going basis to ensure rigor? (PP, I, PR)

C-3. Does the written curriculum include enrichment strategies? (PP, I)

Rationale: These two questions address the importance of the need for rigor in the written curriculum, including higher levels of cognitive demand in what students are to know and be able to do that extends and enriches the PA Core Standards. An effective written curriculum that addresses students with a history of higher achievement requires an on-going analysis of the implementation of the curriculum to ensure rigor in tasks and assignments.

INSTRUCTION

Start with:

I-1. Are enrichment opportunities provided, based on individual student strengths, interests, and needs? (PP, CE, I, PR)
a. Examples: curriculum compacting, tiered assignments, Socratic circles, study guides, Independent Learning Contracts, etc.

I-2. Is acceleration through grade levels and courses appropriate to the individual student or groups of advanced learners and implemented with consistency? (PP, I)

Rationale: These variables represent fundamental practices in the effective delivery of instruction for students needing enrichment or acceleration opportunities. Therefore, they represent an effective starting point to "dig deeply" to determine root causes of the data observations and patterns. Once these key variables are addressed, other instructional variables can be addressed and discussed for probing further.

ASSESSMENT

Start with:

A-1. Are pre-assessments used to plan instruction for higher achieving students? (PP, I)

A-11. Through strategic use of assessment, are advanced level learners able to access content earlier or faster than generally accessible? (PP, I)

Rationale: These variables are key to the access of the enriching written curriculum in a timely fashion and allows for enrichment and acceleration opportunities to be based on students' needs on a regular basis at the beginning of the school year, as well as throughout the year. It represents a starting point for discussion about the health of your assessment system within the context of students with a history of higher achievement.

ORGANIZATION

Start with:

O-1. Does the school master schedule address the needs of higher achieving students?
(PP, I)

a. Examples:

- Students who are higher achieving receive enrichment during intervention period
- Students who are higher achieving have opportunities for extension classes and/or acceleration
- Strategic grouping allows for advanced learners to have a peer group for learning

O-5. Are teachers trained in how to compact the curriculum to meet the needs of higher achieving students? (I, PR)

O-7. Are educators provided with professional learning opportunities on strategies for enrichment? (PR)

Rationale: While there are many important variables in the organizational structures of a school, these three questions may represent good starting points for discussion. A master schedule that meets the needs of both higher achieving and lower achieving students is a fundamental building block. Additionally, providing professional learning opportunities for teachers that explicitly address instructional approaches and strategies for enrichment and acceleration when needed is key.

Note: Again, these are merely suggestions for starting points, representing fundamental practices and structures typically needed in order to move forward in enhancing the learning outcomes for all students. Choosing the questions to discuss, and the order in which to discuss them, is an important local decision to arrive at the best plans of action for current students.

CURRICULUM

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Higher Achievement*

CURRICULUM



C-1. Does the written curriculum address higher levels of cognition as described in Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Level 3 and 4)? Is it analyzed on an on-going basis to ensure rigor? (PP, I, PR)

C-2. Do all teachers, core and supplemental, have access to the written curriculum? (PP, PR)

C-3. Does the written curriculum include enrichment strategies? (PP, I)

C-4. Does the written curriculum allow for a vertical trace of skills to provide for acceleration (e.g., telescoping, continuous progress, subject acceleration)? (PP, I)

C-5. Is differentiated instruction an expectation, and is it specified in the written curriculum? (PP, I)

C-6. Is there enough stretch in the scope and sequence of courses to provide for higher achieving students who need enrichment or acceleration? (PP, I)

C-7. Does the curriculum allow for concurrent/dual enrollment? (PP, I)

C-8. Does the curriculum allow for credit by examination? (PP, I)

C-9. Is the curriculum written in a way that identifies how curriculum compacting may occur? (PP, I)

C-10. Is there a generally accessible pathway for any advanced learner to eventually access Advanced Placement Courses? (PP, I)

INSTRUCTION

*Students with a History of
Higher Achievement*

INSTRUCTION



I-1. Are enrichment opportunities provided, based on individual student strengths, interests, and needs? (PP, CE, I, PR)

- a. Examples: curriculum compacting, tiered assignments, Socratic circles, study guides, Independent Learning Contracts, etc.

I-2. Is acceleration through grade levels and courses appropriate to the individual student or groups of advanced learners and implemented with consistency? (PP, I)

I-3. Are advanced learners engaged in continuous progress/self-paced instruction to progressively move forward as prior content is completed and mastered (acceleration)? (PP, CE, I)

I-4. Are students enriched through resource materials at higher/more complex reading levels? (PP, I)

I-5. Are students enriched through student-guided and/or self-selection of texts and genres that match academic strengths or interests on reading level? (PP, CE, I)

I-6. Are students enriched through practice in non-fiction reading and writing assignments aligned to content areas or beyond what is offered in grade level setting? (PP, I)

I-7. Is homework differentiated to provide meaningful and challenging work? (PP, CE, I)

I-8. Is within-class flexible grouping used as an instructional strategy to provide enrichment and/or acceleration? (PP, I)

ASSESSMENT



A-1. Are pre-assessments used to plan instruction for higher achieving students? (PP, I)

A-2. Are rubrics used, as appropriate to the task, for classroom assessments to encourage stretch for higher achieving students? (PP, I)

A-3. Do assessments for higher achieving students match the complexity level of the assigned task? (PP, I)

A-4. Are PVAAS projections used to identify individual student's projections to an Advanced level of performance on upcoming PSSA/Keystone?

A-5. Are PVAAS projections used in conferencing with students and parents relative to course selection, goal setting, career focus, etc.? (PP, I, PR)

A-6. Are projections to AP exams used to guide individual students and their families in AP course selections? (PP, I, PR)

A-7. Are projections to PSAT, SAT, and ACT used to inform students' likelihood of scoring above established targets? (PP, I, PR)

A-8. At the school level, are PVAAS projections used to plan for AP course scope and needs for alternate options for students, such as dual enrollment, online courses, etc.? (PP, I, PR)

A-9. Are formative assessments administered and analyzed to allow for adjusted pace and potential rapid movement through planned units of study? (PP, I)

A-10. Do summative tasks address higher levels of Webb's Depth of Knowledge? (PP, I)

A-11. Through strategic use of assessment, are advanced level learners able to access content earlier or faster than generally accessible? (PP, I)

ORGANIZATION



O-1. Does the school master schedule address the needs of higher achieving students? (PP, I)

b. Examples:

- Students who are higher achieving receive enrichment during intervention period
- Students who are higher achieving have opportunities for extension classes and/or acceleration
- Strategic grouping allows for advanced learners to have a peer group for learning

O-2. Are gifted services (enrichment, acceleration, or a combination of both) aligned to the curriculum and tailored to the academic strengths of each identified student? (PP, CE, I)

O-3. Are opportunities in place for collaboration between general education teacher and gifted support teacher? (PP, I, PR)

O-4. Are teachers provided ongoing support in understanding the characteristics of the gifted learner and how to address their needs? (PP, CE, I, PR)

O-5. Are teachers trained in how to compact the curriculum to meet the needs of higher achieving students? (I, PR)

O-6. Are materials and resources available to meet the needs of students receiving enrichment and/or accelerated instruction? (PP, I)

O-7. Are educators provided with professional learning opportunities on strategies for enrichment? (PR)

O-8. Are educators provided with professional learning opportunities on strategies for acceleration? (PR)

O-9. Is there an articulated acceleration protocol for advanced learners to maintain consistency among buildings? (PR)

O-10. Are multiple data sources analyzed to determine and communicate overall effectiveness of enrichment and/or acceleration? (PP, I)