



TO: Scott Swisher, Ed.D.
Deputy Commissioner of Education

FROM: Donlynn Rice, Senior Administrator, Curriculum and Instruction
Mary Duffy, Director of High Ability Learning

SUBJECT: High Ability Learners Report

Proposed Board Action:

None

Background Information:

In October of 2013, The State Board requested a report on the status of high ability learning in Nebraska. A written report is being provided this month with a verbal report to be given in December. Mary Duffy, the Director of High Ability Learning, is not able to attend the the November meeting and therefore submits the attached report.

Estimated Cost:

Supporting Documentation Included:

For Additional Information on this item:

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**Report to the Nebraska State Board of Education
High Ability Learning
November 7-8, 2013**

History

In 1996-1997, the Nebraska Legislature, enacted legislation that would benefit gifted children and high ability learners. LB 900 was enacted into law which would result in the establishment of *Regulations Governing High Ability Learners Title 2, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 3*, better known as Rule 3. This rule became operational on December 15, 1998.

During that year, \$6,000,000.00 was allocated for districts to fund programs for high ability learners. Rule 3 included provisions for districts to apply for funds to defray “start-up” costs, as well and to sustain programs that were already in place. Districts were eligible to apply for base funds only or base and matching funds. Base funds were set at 1% of the total state funds. If districts applied for base and matching funds, those districts would receive 1% of the allocated funds and matching funds based on 10% of the local district population or the number of eligible high ability learner students, whichever is less. The district is required to match the amount of matching funds at a 50% or more level. Since 1998, funds have decreased to \$2,300,000 for the 2013-14 school year. This is a decrease of \$3,700,000.

Each district wanting to receive funds must have an approved plan for the delivery of accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs for high ability learners. Rule 3 sets the requirements for the HAL plans. They are:

1. Statement of philosophy regarding services for high ability learners
2. District’s operational definition of a high ability learner
3. Goals and objectives of the high ability learner program.
4. Procedures for identifying high ability learners (standardized and non-standardized measures
5. Continuum of services
6. Program evaluation
7. Professional development
8. Program management and evaluation
9. Inclusion of Class I schools (obsolete)

As stated before, Rule 3 was initiated in 1998. It is in need of revision to come into compliance with the statutes that are referenced in this rule.

2013-1014 School Year Statistics

Each year districts wanting to receive funds for high ability programs must apply to the Department. Total amount of funds that have been made available to the districts this year is \$2,300,000. A total of

232 districts have applied for these funds. The number of districts applying for base funds only is 23. The majority of districts applying have applied for base and matching funds. That number is 209. The number of students identified is 42,479.

Funds are used to cover salaries, professional development for administrators, faculty and paraprofessional, materials, and equipment.

At the December board meeting, there will be more extensive information given on such topics as model programs throughout the state; funding per district; latest research on issues in identification (twice exceptional, English language learners, high poverty and early childhood); national issues; and plans to update Rule 3 to bring it into compliance with state statutes.