



Nebraska Department of Education

300 Centennial Mall South ♦ Lincoln, Nebraska ♦ 68508

High Ability Learning

January 2021

Questions, Comments, and Concerns—Oh My!

Happy New Year, Nebraska! I am excited for a brand new year—so many opportunities! 2021 is going to be an incredible opportunity for growth in our state. I am so lucky to get to share these opportunities with you.

While I usually have fun researching and writing for the newsletters, this edition is all about you! One thing about growth is that it requires A LOT

of feedback. I am taking this month to push out information and ask for some of your time to give feedback in a few different areas.

Rule 3 revision, webinar series evaluation, AP course survey, and HAL Forum dates are a few of the items I will be posting in the contents of this newsletter. In addition to taking some time to fill these out, I am also asking for you to PLEASE share these links with anyone and everyone you know. Most of the content that I share with you (the webinar series, in particular) has spread far beyond my reach, and I am incredibly grateful! Please continue to share. The more feedback I receive, the better I can serve you!

Thank you in advance for your time!

I look forward to hearing from you!



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HAL and SEL Webinar Series: *We need your help!*



Thank you for your support for the High Ability Learners and Social Emotional Learning Webinar Series. The turn-out was much larger than we could have ever imagined, so thank you for your willingness to watch!

My colleague, Jude Matyo-Cepero, and I are conducting a study on the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous webinars as a form of professional learning. We are studying not only the effectiveness of the content, but also the delivery. To draw conclusions, we need your help! If you watched a live session, a recording, or both, we would love if you would take a brief survey about the series delivery and content. Here is the link:

<https://forms.gle/pEmUYPGqUDSgy55o6>

Additionally, please send the link to anyone who watched a session, anyone who is still interested in watching a session and giving feedback (sessions found here: <https://www.education.ne.gov/hal/hal-sel-webinar-series/>), or send it to all of your contacts! The more feedback, the better we can serve Nebraska in the future.

Upcoming Events

◆
Spring 2021 HAL
Forum
In planning phase

◆
Spring 2021
Webinar Series
In planning phase

◆
Vanderbilt Gifted
Education Institute
Spring
Conference:
Curriculum
Resources and
Design for the
Gifted Learner
March 8-9

<https://pty.vanderbilt.edu/educators/gei/>

◆
Nebraska MTSS
Summit
October 6-8
Kearney, NE

◆
Nebraska School
Mental Health
Conference
June 4-5
<https://www.thekimfooundation.org/nebraska-school-mental-health/>



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HAL Spotlight: Molly Wolfe-Koehler

The purpose of the HAL Spotlight is to allow you to connect and meet your counterparts across the state. Feel free to reach out to one another! Establishing a cohesive network is super important, and it reminds us that we all have one common goal—serving HAL students.

The educator in the spotlight this month is Molly Wolfe-Koehler. Molly brings a positive attitude and clear passion for students to everything she does. She has had 5+ years as a HAL educator, as well as holding a position on the board of Nebraska Association for the Gifted. She is a great resource to connect with!



K-12 HAL Facilitator
Bellevue Public Schools
molly.wolfekoehler@bpsne.net

What is your favorite part about working with High Ability Learners?

I am endlessly fascinated by our high ability students and how they move through the world. They often bring such fascinating perspectives and demonstrate a passion for their interests. The highlight, without question, is witnessing the satisfaction students feel when they are connected with meaningful learning experiences.

What are some challenges you have faced working with HALs?

The disengaged high ability student is what really drives me. The reasons are varied and complex, so I am constantly seeking out ways to connect kids to experiences that interest them and help them develop a sense of purpose. Another challenge we face is the misconception that all HAL students are model students who are academically motivated and high-achieving. While this is absolutely true for some, formal identification is not contingent upon that criteria. We work diligently to help deepen the understanding of colleagues and students so that formal identification is really about accountability to meet student needs, not a label that must be lived up to.

What is something you would like to tell other HAL people across the state?

I love learning from other educators about what they do best, so reach out to each other, stay connected, and always keep striving to increase your knowledge and understanding.

What do you like to do in your free time?



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My favorite free time activities include finding and reading great books and then sharing them, watching addictive TV and talking about it with friends, and pushing my limits physically by working out really hard almost every day.

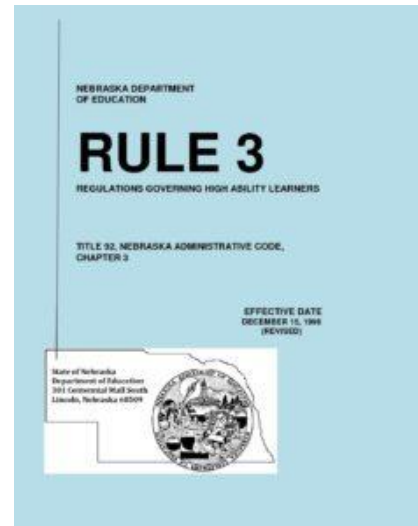
If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?

Infinite wisdom so I would be fully prepared, level-headed, and ready to handle virtually any situation.

Rule 3 Revision Stakeholder Feedback

It has been 22 years since Rule 3, the rule governing High Ability Learners, has been updated. I am opening the rule for revision this year! While I am excited for the new rule, I am collecting information to get an idea of how the current rule is being used, and how we can improve with the rule revision. This short Qualtrics survey can be filled out by everyone—administrators, teachers, partner organizations, etc. Seriously—please send this to all your people. I actually mean it when I say short! It is only 3 questions! There will be a SEPARATE survey available at a later date for families. Here is a link to this survey:

https://nde.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8GoUVu2hiQX0ool



Advanced Placement Training Survey



The NDE is exploring the possibility of hosting statewide teacher training for Advanced Placement (AP) courses. This questionnaire is being used to determine the AP courses Nebraska school districts would be interested in having teachers trained. Please answer this short questionnaire, found here: <https://forms.gle/3tD5kr3ifRZaXF1a7>



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Spring 2021 HAL Forum



Across the state, I have received feedback that you all would like to communicate with your HAL counterparts in different areas. The fall HAL Forum was great, and I received feedback to make it even better! This event is an opportunity to gather, reflect, share ideas, and make connections. Please fill out this survey of dates and times for the Spring forum. It can be filled out here: <https://forms.gle/jxo78kf9yuUrJ1LG7>



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