



## Nebraska Department of Education

# High Ability Learning

August 2021

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### Refreshed and Ready: Gearing Up for Back to School!



Welcome back! I cannot believe how fast summer went, and I hope that you had some time to turn off your email, step away, and take some time for yourself. To say last school year was challenging is a gross understatement. While I am sure none of us would ever want to repeat it, we did a lot of learning, adapting, and used some strategies that we can keep! I am excited at the prospect of a more typical school year and all we can accomplish.

I challenge you to think about some “COVID Keeps,” or things that worked last school year that you would like to continue to implement this year. Whether it is a technology strategy, SEL focus, or instructional consideration, we all learned something from the pandemic that will continue to improve the educational experience of HAL students.

The purpose of this newsletter is primarily as a refresher and to provide updates. I have a lot of exciting opportunities in store this year, and I cannot wait to share them with you!



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## NILA and NDE Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy



The Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy is a collaboration of the Nebraska International Language Association and the Nebraska Department of Education. The Seal is awarded to students who have demonstrated at least an Intermediate Mid proficiency in English and one other language through one of the established methods. Students

can apply directly through an online process. The Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy is a recognition of a student's multilingual abilities in postsecondary education and the workforce. Colleges and universities may consider the Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy in the college placement process. Employers may consider the Seal as superior evidence of a candidate's abilities. To find out more about the Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy, visit the website at [www.education.ne.gov/worldlanguage](https://www.education.ne.gov/worldlanguage).

## HAL Funding Application

The 2021-2022 HAL Funding Application opens on August 1, 2021. It is imperative that the person in charge of filling out the application does so by **September 15, 2021**. For access to the portal, links to instructions and examples, and a short video on how to navigate the application, visit <https://www.education.ne.gov/hal/hal-funding-application/>

### **NEW THIS YEAR:**

You cannot submit the application without your HAL Plan. Per Nebraska Rule 3 (1998):

*"In order to be an approved program, each school district shall identify learners with high ability...Each approved plan for a school district, whether provided by the district or for the district by an ESU, shall include the following elements:"*

- Philosophy on educational service to HALs
- Operational definition of HAL
- Goals and objectives of the program
- Description of continuum of services
- Program planning/evaluation
- Staff development and training plan
- Program management outline

The information on what is to be included in a plan, a plan outline, and an example plan can be found at <https://www.education.ne.gov/hal/hal-funding-application/>

Additionally, the plan must be made publicly available. Nebraska Rule 3 (1998) states:  
*"Each school district or Educational Service Unit shall make the written plan available to the citizens of the district."*



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If your district has a HAL Plan, it should be evaluated and revised EVERY YEAR. According to Nebraska Rule 3 (1998):

*"Every district serving high ability learners shall establish procedures for both formative and summative evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the district-wide plan for services extended to the learners with high ability."*

*"The local plan should be revised according to the results of the yearly review."*

You do not have to create an extensive evaluation process, but you do need to look at your plan yearly and decide where you can make improvements.

In order to be in compliance with Nebraska Rule 3 and receive funding, these guidelines must be followed. If you have questions about the application, please contact me at Sheyanne.meadows@nebraska.gov

## A Message from Nebraska Academic Decathlon:

The Nebraska Academic Decathlon (NEAD) is a well-established educational program for high school students that builds testing skills, confidence, and teamwork. For almost 40 years, participation in NEAD has provided students with a challenging curriculum and the opportunity to compete with others from across the state. There were many adjustments this past year, but NEAD successfully hosted all the competitions. Winning teams earn scholarships and have the opportunity to move on to national competition. Four Nebraska schools of various sizes participated in online nationals at the end of April. Nationals are scheduled to take place in Pittsburgh, PA in April 2022.



The program requires students to develop an understanding of a specific curriculum devised by United States Academic Decathlon (USAD) and take tests in seven academic subjects. This year's curriculum topic, Water: A Most Essential Resource, should resonate with many students, especially in Nebraska. In addition, students develop essential skills writing essays, presenting both a planned and impromptu speech, and completing an interview.

Another strength is that teams must be composed of students with a broad range of GPAs, drawing on the talents of many students with a variety of academic and public speaking interests. ALL students: introverts and extroverts, those who have charted their academic course and those who are academically at sea, can excel in Academic Decathlon.



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**Financial Support:**

- New schools receive the curriculum from USAD at no cost the first year, and for the next two years, NEAD provides substantial support for curriculum purchases.
- NEAD provides funds for the first five new small or very small schools to support a faculty sponsor.

**Benefits for Students:**

- The enhanced knowledge and deeper learning students gain by studying a comprehensive curriculum enriches education in ways that trivia competitions cannot do.
- Students of different GPA levels work together for a team score, learning teamwork and cooperation that will serve them well in many life situations.
- Many chances to earn medals and scholarships
- Many universities and colleges grant admission points for each year a student participates in the Academic Decathlon.

**For more information, contact:**

Vicki Deniston Reed  
Nebraska Academic Decathlon  
Executive Directorship Team Leader denistonreed@gmail.com  
531-239-0037

## Coming This Year...



We have several events coming this semester! Stay tuned for updates about the following opportunities:

- Fall HAL Educator Forum
- Fall HAL Parent Forum
- Fall Webinar Series
- Statewide Book Club
- Using NSCAS Growth Data for HAL Webinar
- NAGC 2021

AND MORE!!!



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