

Highly Capable Programs

Definition

Highly capable students are students who perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels when compared with others of their age, experiences, or environments. Outstanding abilities are seen within students' general intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, and/or creative productivities within a specific domain. These students are present not only in the general populace, but are present within all protected classes.

Students who are highly capable may possess, but are not limited to, these learning characteristics:

- (1) Capacity to learn with unusual depth of understanding, to retain what has been learned, and to transfer learning to new situations;
- (2) Capacity and willingness to deal with increasing levels of abstraction and complexity earlier than their chronological peers;
- (3) Creative ability to make unusual connections among ideas and concepts;
- (4) Ability to learn quickly in their area(s) of intellectual strength; and
- (5) Capacity for intense concentration and/or focus.

The following procedures will be employed to nominate, assess and select students to participate in the program:

Nomination

Referrals are permitted and accepted based on data or evidence from teachers, other staff, parents, students, and members of the community. Nominators will use the district's nomination form to refer a student to be considered for admission in the program.

Screening

The district will screen each nominee to identify students who qualify for further assessment. Screening criteria may include the following: Cognitive Ability (CogAT) Screener.

Assessment

The district will obtain written parental permission prior to conducting assessments to determine eligibility for participation in its Highly Capable Program (HCP).

Nominees identified for further testing through the screening process will be assessed using multiple objective criteria. The assessment process shall be based upon a review of each nominee's capability as shown by multiple criteria, from a wide variety of sources and data, intended to reveal each nominee's unique needs and capabilities. The assessment criterion consists of both qualitative and quantitative (district may select one or both) instruments and may include: CogAT Test, Northwest Education Assessment (NWEA) and Teacher checklists.

Test results will be recorded in the student's cumulative file.

Selection

A multi-disciplinary selection committee composed of a district administrator, psychologist or other individual who can interpret cognitive and achievement test results and a teacher will review data that has been collected for each of the nominated students. The multi-disciplinary selection committee is composed of: Curriculum Director, School Psychologist, Kindergarten Teacher (2) and Speech Specialist.

The multi-disciplinary selection committee will evaluate individual student assessment profile data using a blind (no name) process. The selection decision is based on:

- (1) A preponderance of evidence from the profile data demonstrating that a student is among the most highly capable;
- (2) Evidence of clear need for highly capable services; and
- (3) Determination of which students would benefit the most from inclusion in the district's program.

A single assessment score or indicator will not prevent a student's selection for the HCP; however, individual pieces of evidence, if strong enough, can indicate that the student would benefit from services. If properly validated tests are not available, the professional judgment of the qualified district personnel shall determine eligibility of the student based upon evidence of cognitive ability and/or academic achievement.

The district will:

- A. Notify parents of students who have been selected. Parents will receive a full explanation of the procedures for identification, an explanation of the appeal process, an explanation of the procedures to exit a student from the program, the information on the district's program and the options that are available to identified students;
- B. Obtain parental permission to place identified students in the program before any special services and programs are provided to the student;
- C. Schedule a meeting of all such parents; and
- D. Conduct an annual parent meeting to review each student's educational plan.

Process for Appeal

Parents/legal guardians have the right to appeal the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee's decision. Individuals appealing the selection committee's decision must submit a completed appeals form or letter requesting review of selection/placement decision. The written request must include reasons for the appeal and, to support reconsideration, provide additional evidence of significantly advanced cognitive or academic levels and/or outstanding intellectual, academic, or creative abilities.

The appeal request and supporting evidence must be submitted to Charlotte Throgmorton, Curriculum Director, 501 C ST NW, Ephrata, WA 98823 within 10 school days of the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee's decision notification.

The district's Multidisciplinary Committee will review the student's file, assessment profile data, and additional evidence provided in the request for appeal.

The decision of the multidisciplinary selection committee may include:

- Upholding the original decision of the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee;
- Reversing the decision of the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee;

A decision will be made by the Appeals Committee within 10 school days after receipt of written request for reconsideration. The parent/legal guardian will be notified of the decision in writing. The decision of the Multidisciplinary Committee is final.

Exit Process

The exit process may be initiated for students who no longer demonstrate a need for highly capable program services. A request may be made by a teacher or program administrator for highly capable student identification and placement discontinuation. The Multi-Disciplinary

Selection Committee will convene a meeting to review the student's profile to determine if the student qualifies for program services based on assessment data and selection criteria. The multi-disciplinary selection committee may request additional evidence of student capabilities and/or willingness to participate in the program. If the committee determines that the student no longer qualifies for highly capable program services, it may be recommended that the student exited from the program. The parent will be notified in writing of the committee's decision and of the appeal's process.

A parent/legal guardian may request that the student be withdrawn from the program or a student may voluntarily withdraw from the program. A meeting will be convened by the Highly Capable Program Coordinator/Director to discuss the request. If the parent/legal guardian desires to withdraw the student from the program, the student will be exited from the program. The multi-disciplinary selection committee will determine if identification procedures are necessary for students wishing to reenter the program in the future.

Program Design

The district will make a variety of appropriate program services available to students who participate in the program. Once services are started, a continuum of services will be proved to identify students in grades K-12. The district will keep on file a description of the educational programs provided for identified students. The district reviews services annually for each student to ensure that the services are appropriate.

The district will offer highly capable students the following programs:

K-5 – Grade level clustering at the building will be used. Clustering is defined as an administrative procedure in which identified gifted students at a grade level are assigned to one classroom with a teacher who has specialized training in how to teach gifted students. The other students in their assigned class are of mixed ability. Cluster groups range in size from 6-8 students.

6-8 – Identified students will be scheduled into one period a day which will include the highly capable students grouped by grade level.

9-12 – Services will include English 101 and 102, Honor classes, Advanced Placement and College in the High School courses.

Reporting

Identified students will be assigned the appropriate CEDARS Gifted value(s) in the district's student information system for end-of-year reporting activities.

The superintendent or designee will provide an end-of-the-year report to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) which includes:

- number of students served by grade level K-12;
- Student demographic information;
- Data to determine if students who are highly capable met the goals set and if the programs provided met the academic needs of these students;
- Number and content of professional development activities provided for special teachers and general education staff;

- Program evaluation data and, if needed, program changes that will be made based upon this information; and
- Final fiscal report that reports on activities and staff funded by this program.