



## Highline Public Schools Highly Capable Annual Plan, 2023-24

This plan was developed by members of the Teaching, Learning, and Leadership team in Summer 2023 in response to the state's annual form package 217 for Highly Capable funding. This plan pulls together information shared on the Highline Public Schools website in communication to schools and families. Questions related to any aspect of this plan may be directed to [highlycapable@highlineschools.org](mailto:highlycapable@highlineschools.org).

Sections:

1. Mission, Vision, and Values
2. Identification Process: Notification, Screening/Referral, Assessment, Selection, Appeal
3. Services for identified students
4. Evaluation

### **Mission, Vision, and Values**

Highline's promise is that every student in Highline Public Schools is known by name, strength and need, and graduates prepared for the future they choose. Living our promise, our strategic plan will guide us toward challenging, equitable learning. Highline has four big goals:

- **Culture of Belonging**  
A culture where all are welcome, valued, and safe.
- **Innovative Learning**  
Academic experiences that engage, empower, and challenge every student.
- **Bilingual & Biliterate**  
Multicultural skills that enable students to live, work, and communicate across cultures.
- **Future Ready**  
Students explore possibilities and develop mindsets that prepare them for a changing future.

Informed by Highline's strategic plan and guided by our [Equity Policy](#) which explicitly calls us to be an anti-racist organization, the following areas have been identified for continued prioritization and development:

- Improve equitable and proportionate identification and services for students across Highline
- Support teachers with how to design and respond to the variability in students' learning strengths, differences, and needs, so all students can continue to grow and belong to their learning community
- Implement new Washington State legislation related to identification

To realize this vision, we are building a strong multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and supporting the implementation of personalized learning communities (PLC's) within schools. The primary goal of each PLC is to develop and implement instructional plans informed by four key questions:

1. What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know if they learn it?
3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?
4. How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?

We recognize learner variability as an asset that adds value to our classroom communities. We aim to support this variability through Universal Design for Learning (UDL), an approach to instructional planning that offers flexibility in the ways that students access material, engage with it, and show what they know.

We are also committed to supporting the progress of Highline Schools as an inclusive school system. In part, this includes developing a continuum of supports at every school, eliminating segregated programming, and recognizing past and present disproportionate placement of students due to race, ethnicity, disciplinary action, language learning status, disability, and any other label we have assigned our students. We believe that our services to students should not be dependent on places that remove them from their peers, but on our beliefs, skills and systems that allow individual needs to be met to reach their full potential.

As we work to ensure these goals are realized for all students, we are committed to meeting the needs of our students who need highly capable services. 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.” (WAC 392-170-035)

Rigorous state learning standards, including the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards and social emotional competencies, set high expectations for our students. Our Highly Capable services prioritize depth of learning and application rather than pace of instruction or advancement of grade level content. We know that the ability to work and learn as a part of a diverse peer group makes for lifelong learners and contributes to the greatest success in school, college, career, and citizenship.

Starting in the 2023-24 school year, all schools in Highline will implement a new instructional approach called [Standards-based grading](#). Teachers communicate learning progress with students on an ongoing basis. For those students who are meeting standard, instruction is provided to deepen their learning to have a more complex understanding of the standard. As such, our intent is to provide instruction to allow students to engage in appropriate challenge to achieve a greater depth of knowledge and reach their full potential as scholars.

### **Identification Process:**

Equity is a central tenet of our values. We are committed to ensuring that students eligible for highly capable services increasingly reflect our district's demographics. We are continually working to strengthen our identification process to consider as many students as possible. This is not a short-term strategy. We will continually evaluate and adjust our identification processes as well as our service delivery models in accordance with the [Highline Equity Policy](#) and utilizing the [Highline Equity Lens](#).

Despite our commitment to equitable identification, our identified students do not yet mirror the diversity of our school district. The chart below illustrates trends in identification over the last seven years, specifically for identified students in grades 2 through 8.

Our Hispanic, Black and African American, and Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian students continue to be underrepresented in our Highly Capable services, as our White students continue to be overrepresented. Students receiving English Language (EL) services and students serviced by an IEP are underrepresented as well.

### 2nd - 8th grade distribution of students receiving Highly Capable services

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	HPS 2022-23
	355 Students	370 Students	346 Students	366 Students	358 Students	318 Students	289 Students	9540 Students
<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	<1%	0%	1%
<b>Asian</b>	22%	19%	16%	18%	18%	19%	18%	14%
<b>Black or African American</b>	8%	7%	8%	7%	7%	4%	6%	14%
<b>Hispanic</b>	13%	14%	12%	11%	10%	9%	10%	41%
<b>Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian</b>	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	3%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	11%	12%	13%	12%	11%	11%	11%	10%
<b>White</b>	44%	45%	50%	51%	53%	56%	55%	17%
<b>English Language Services</b>	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	38%
<b>Serviced by an IEP</b>	2%	3%	3%	5%	6%	7%	9%	17%

While we are far from our goal of ensuring that our highly capable services more closely represent the student population of Highline Public Schools, the strategies that will be employed to further equitable identification will include:

- Intentional outreach to staff: We will continue to engage in school-focused outreach to ensure teachers and staff in our underrepresented schools understand qualities of highly capable learners.
- Improved communication with families: We will continue to use electronic communication, available in families' home language, using platforms with which families are already familiar. Additionally, we are working to ensure that staff members at each school are well equipped to provide information to families with whom they have relationships.
- Updated measures for screening/identification: Shifts will be made to our process for 2023-24 as described in the *Screening/Referrals* section of this document.

### ***Notification***

Families are notified about highly capable services in several ways:

- Our district website is regularly updated with the most current information on our highly capable services, identification process, and relevant timelines. If specific dates for the current school year are not yet available, times are provided during which families can expect additional details. Maintaining this information on our website supports families in accessing the information in their home language with the translation and accessibility tools.
- A communication is sent via our district's electronic communication tool to families of all students in grades 1-7 notifying them of highly capable services and our process for testing and identification. This communication is not sent to students who will be in high school settings the following year because almost all HPS students have been screened multiple times and have received our notification letter in earlier grades. This communication is sent approximately one month prior to the start of any testing and is translated into the five most common languages spoken in our community (Spanish, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Somali) Individual translation is provided in other languages as needed.
- School-based staff are also sources of information for families.

### ***Screening/Referrals***

We are committed to providing equitable opportunities for students in Highline and in accordance with the new Washington State [legislation](#) regarding highly capable identification and placement. For the 2023-2024 school year, all students in grades 1-7 will be universally screened through a data review process. The purpose of universal screening is to include students who traditionally are not identified for highly capable services. Eligibility decisions will be based on the review of multiple kinds of evidence/data by the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MSC). The MSC is comprised of people who hold the following roles and backgrounds in the district: central office administrators, curriculum and instruction directors and specialists, special education team members, school counselors and/or school psychologists, principals, and teachers. Examples of evidence to be reviewed are various student performance metrics and measures that demonstrate significant areas of growth. Referrals (formally

called nominations) are no longer necessary with the universal screening process in place. The 2023-2024 school year will be the last time referrals will be accepted.

Identification for kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students is based on teacher observation and classroom assessments. Identified kindergarten and 1st grade students are eligible for the current school year only. The student will need to go through the identification process the following year to be eligible for future services.

Although there is no requirement to administer a new assessment for the purpose of universal screening, Highline will administer a cognitive screener to all 2nd and 5th graders as an additional data measure to determine whether a student is eligible for highly capable services. We recognize that intelligence does not always present itself in traditional ways in early grades, especially for students for whom English may not be a first language and those without access to early learning experiences. See information about the cognitive screener described in the *more about the assessments* section of this document.

**Assessment**

The following data points are considered as a part of our identification process for 2023-2024 which takes place in the Spring:

	iReady Assessment	Naglieri general ability test	SBA	Common classroom-based assessments, when available
K	X			X
1-2	X	X		X
3-7	X	X	X	X

In this process, we look at the confluence of data based on the recommendations of the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee.

**More about the assessments:**

- The iReady assessment is our district adopted proficiency and growth measurement tool and is administered two to three times each year in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The assessment focuses on student mastery of and growth in state learning standards.
- The Naglieri General Ability tests are nonverbal measures of general ability for school aged children. They provide information regarding students' cognitive abilities and reasoning skills. The Naglieri General Ability tests have been developed to combat the challenges in the identification of high ability students with limited English language proficiency. The Naglieri General Ability Tests feature language-free animated test instructions and item content that has been designed to reduce the demand for academic knowledge and allowing students to solve problems regardless of the language they speak.

- The SBA (Smarter Balanced Assessment) is a state-required assessment used to measure students' proficiency on grade-level standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The SBA is typically administered each spring beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- The Independent Reading Level Assessment is a formative assessment which identifies a baseline reading level. The IRLA (Independent Reading Level Assessment) is frequently given through the school year and used to locate each student on a continuum of reading standards and skills.
- Classroom/unit assessments - Unit summative assessments measured against a standard are provided as part of the curriculum in math and literacy. Additional classroom formative assessments are ongoing observations that happen informally at several points throughout each day and may include on-demand writing tasks, and student presentation of work.

### ***Selection***

Using the available data at the time of identification, the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MDC) meets in the spring to review the data and collection of evidence to make recommendations of eligibility for highly capable services. We seek to get a full understanding of student strengths and may reach out to teachers when we have questions about the available data.

For 2023-2024, we will continue to ask teachers to provide insight on student strengths through use of the HOPE teacher rating scale. Information gathered from this tool will not be used to exclude any student from identification but may serve as another data source to support identification when other data is not consistent.

### ***Caregiver permission to test and beginning services***

In 2023-2024, all families of students in grades 1-7 will be notified via the district's communication tool with information about the identification process. This message includes directions for opting their student out of the process, and is translated as needed into in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Amharic, and Somali.

For all students who participate in our identification process and are determined eligible for services, a letter is sent home in the family's primary language of choice. Families are only contacted if their student becomes eligible. For students determined to be eligible for services, families must submit an online form indicating their desire to accept them. Families may also call or email the Highly Capable department to accept services.

### **Services for Identified Students**

We strive to provide educational opportunities that consider each student's strengths and needs. We are committed to providing academic challenge for our students, including those who are meeting and/or exceeding standards, so that they can meet their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally to prepare them for life beyond high school.

Kindergarten through 1st grade services is provided in the student's home school/classroom, with teachers providing extensions during literacy and math blocks.

Our 2023-2024 services in grades 2-8 include:

- **Highly Capable Service Plan** - The Highly Capable Learning Plan (grades 2-5) provides students an option to receive services at their neighborhood school in their general education classroom. Teachers look at student's strengths, interests, and learning styles to support individual goal setting. These goals help students grow in areas they excel in and areas of need. The plan may include differentiated instruction including small group support with peers. Through a personalized digital platform, students learn more about their strengths, interests, aspirations, learning styles and how to apply them including social emotional learning opportunities. Students participate in classroom instruction at their current grade level.
- **Challenge** - The Challenge curriculum is the same as the rest of the students at their grade level. Teachers differentiate the instruction to deepen and extend learning when appropriate, and students work and learn as a part of a diverse peer group. Students approach learning from multiple perspectives and are given opportunities to grapple with a more complex understanding of grade level standards.
- **Earned Honors** - Earned Honors is available at all Highline comprehensive middle schools and provides an opportunity to deepen learning for all students who are demonstrating mastery of grade-level standard(s) and showing potential to benefit from more complex work based on their strengths and learning needs. For students who qualify for highly capable services, this option allows students to remain at their home school.

See this [website page](#) for more information about program locations. There are locations for both elementary and middle school students.

Our services in high school include intentional course pathways that continue students' accelerated trajectory toward success in college-like coursework (AP, IB, Running Start and College in the High School). Students will be encouraged to take these college-like courses as early as possible in high school, while still engaging in foundational courses to fulfill graduation and academic program requirements and continue the learning trajectory by taking the highest-level courses available either at their school or at local colleges through Running Start.

***Professional Development:***

Professional learning opportunities for teachers of students eligible for highly capable services is focused on the following key focus areas:

- **Standards Based Instruction** - building deep understanding of the state learning standards so they can identify when students are approaching standard, meeting standard, and/or exceeding standard, as well as build their understanding of units, lessons, and activities that support students to think strategically and critically.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** - honors learner variability and address barriers that may arise for students.

- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** - enables teaching teams to work together to answer key questions, including “How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?”
- **District Professional Development** - learning opportunities are available for teachers to support the unique needs of all learners.

## **Evaluation**

To meet our goals of excellence and equity for students eligible for highly capable services, it is critical that we engage in robust evaluation. We believe that students receiving highly capable services should master, not just be proficient in, grade-level state learning standards. This would mean they are regularly exposed to and engaging in complex thinking.

i-Ready and Smarter Balanced Assessments are Highline’s indicators of academic growth and performance, and the data is typically reviewed each fall for students receiving highly capable services. Annual surveys are also regularly administered to students, families, and staff allowing for valuable information around learning and growth areas that are often harder to measure via traditional assessments.