

Tumwater School District Procedures

HIGHLY CAPABLE PROGRAMS

Tumwater School District's K-12 students who have been identified as needing highly capable services will have access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction RCW 28A.185.020. Access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction through the program for highly capable students does not constitute an individual entitlement for any particular student.

Definition of Highly Capable Student

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:

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

Students in grades K-12 may be nominated to receive Highly Capable Services. The nominations may come from any source including the student, a teacher, parents, another student or members of the community. Anyone nominating a student shall complete a referral form and submit it to the student's counselor or District Highly Capable office during the annual nomination window. 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 into the program.

Students may be nominated once in elementary (grades K – 5), once in middle school (grades 6 – 8), and once in high school (grades 9 – 12).

Screening

The district will conduct universal screening for students in grade 2. In addition, each nominee will be screened to identify students who qualify for further assessment. Screening criteria may include the following: CogAT screening assessment, district assessment data, state assessment data, observational checklists, or student grade reports.

Assessment

The district will notify parents prior to conducting assessments to determine eligibility for participation in its Highly Capable Program (HCP). Parents who do not want their children tested may refuse to give their permission for testing.

Nominees identified for further testing through the screening process will be assessed using multiple objective criteria, from a wide variety of sources and data, intended to reveal each nominee's unique needs and capabilities. The assessment criteria consist of both qualitative and quantitative instruments and may include the CogAT Full Battery Test, state assessment data, district assessment data, observational checklists, or teacher scales. Assessment results will be recorded in the student's cumulative file.

Selection

A multi-disciplinary selection committee will review data that has been collected for each of the nominated students. The multi-disciplinary selection committee includes at least one teacher from the highly capable program, the district supervisor for assessment or a school psychologist, a certificated coordinator or administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's highly capable program; and additional professionals, if any, that the district deems desirable.

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

- A preponderance of evidence from the profile data demonstrating that a student is among the most highly capable;
- Evidence of clear need for highly capable services; and
- 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 student scores, 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 the Highly Capable Supervisor, 621 Linwood Ave SW, Tumwater, WA 98512, within 15 school days of the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee's decision notification.

The district's multidisciplinary selection 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:

- Uphold the original decision of the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee;
- Reverse the original decision of the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee;

A decision will be made by the Multidisciplinary Committee within 35 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 Appeals Committee is final and a written summary of the findings will be sent to the person filing the appeal and a copy will be placed in the cumulative file.

Exit Process

Annual review of performance will be conducted for all students selected for highly capable services. For students not meeting performance expectations, students and their parents/guardians will be notified by the classroom teacher when assessment of performance falls below the performance expectations. A meeting to discuss plans for student support will occur within thirty (30) school days of the parent/guardian notification.

At that meeting, a written plan of improvement will be created that includes strategies for support mutually developed and reviewed with parents/guardians and instructional staff. The plan will be reviewed within (45) school days in order to assess student progress. Should the student demonstrate program performance expectations as indicated in the written plan of improvement, he or she will continue in the assigned placement. Should the student fail to make improvements in the identified areas of the plan, future options and exit criteria will be discussed with the parent/guardian. The MCS will make all final decisions when exiting a student 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 Supervisor 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 Options

Learning opportunities shown by research and practice to be especially effective with highly capable students may include, but are not limited to:

1. Accelerated learning opportunities;
2. Grouping arrangements that provide intellectual and interest peer group interactions;
3. Cooperative agreements between K-12 schools and institutions of higher education providing for concurrent enrollment, dual credit, and other advance and/or postsecondary options;
4. Programs designed to coordinate, combine and/or share resources, people and facilities within a district or building in order to maximize access to and utilization of available resources for supporting students' learning;
5. Mentorships and career exploration opportunities

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 provided to identified 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.

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.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: September 30, 2019