

POLICY NO. 6300
Adopted: 1-24-96
Revised: 8-27-14
Revised: 6-12-24

HIGHLY CAPABLE PROGRAMS

POLICY:

In order to develop the special abilities of each student, the District will offer a Highly Capable Program which provides kindergarten through twelfth grade students selected for the program access to basic education programs that accelerates learning and enhances instruction. The framework for such programs shall encompass, but not be limited to, the following objectives:

1. Expansion of academic attainments and intellectual skills;
2. Stimulation of intellectual curiosity, independence, and responsibility;
3. Development of a positive attitude toward self and others; and
4. Development of originality and creativity.

The Board will annually approve the District's highly capable plan, including the number of students the District expects to serve by grade level; the District's plan to identify students; a description of the Highly Capable Program goals; a description of the services the program will offer; an instructional program description; a description of ongoing professional development for the Highly Capable Program and general education staff; program evaluation and fiscal report; and assurances that the District is legally compliant.

The Superintendent shall establish procedures consistent with state guidelines for referral assessment and selection of children of demonstrated achievement or potential ability in terms of general intellectual ability, academic aptitude, and creative or productive thinking. These include prioritizing equitable identification of students with the goal of our HiCap Program being reflective of our student body as a whole; use of multiple objective criteria for identification; and use of screening and assessment in the students' native language (if available) or nonverbal assessment tools.

Cross Reference:
WSSDA Policy No. 2190

Legal References:
RCW 28A.185.030 Programs--Authority of local school districts--Selection of students
WAC 392-170 Special services program--Highly capable students

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PROCEDURES:

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 a student's general intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, and/or creative productivity within a specific domain. These students are present in the general populace, and 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 other 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~~ refer, assess, and select students to participate in the program:

Universal Screening

The District will conduct Universal Screening with all students in two different elementary grade levels using a nonverbal screening tool. Students who score in the highest percentiles in their grade level will receive family communication encouraging them to nominate their student for consideration for the HiCap Program.

Referral

The District accepts referrals 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 further assessment and consideration for admission in the program.

Assessment

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

Students referred for further testing 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 instruments and may include:

- CogAT assessment (Cognitive Aptitude Test)
- i-Ready and STAR and other district assessments
- SBA and WCAS state assessment results
- Teacher and Family Inventory of Learning, Motivation, and Creativity
- WIDA language proficiency growth

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

Selection

The Multidisciplinary Selection Committee is composed of a special teacher (provided that if a special teacher is not available, a classroom teacher shall be appointed); a psychologist or other qualified practitioner with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results, a certified coordinator or administrator with the responsibility for the supervision of the District's highly capable program, and additional professionals, if any, that the District deems desirable.

The Multidisciplinary Selection Committee will evaluate individual student assessment profile data and make the selection decision 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 these 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 and/or academic achievement.

The District will:

1. Notify parents of students who have been selected. Parents will receive a full explanation of the procedures for identification, an explanation of the process to exit a student from the program, the information on the District's program, and the options that are available to identified students; and
2. Obtain parental permission to place identified students in the program before any special services and programs are provided to the student.

Process for Appeal

Parents/legal guardians have the right to appeal the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee's decision. Individuals appealing the committee's decision must submit a completed appeals 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 HiCap Program Coordinator by email within 30 days of the Multidisciplinary 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:

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

A decision will be made within 30 days after receipt of written request for reconsideration. The parent/legal guardian will be notified of the decision in writing. The decision of the committee is final.

Exit 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 Executive Director of Student Intervention 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 Multidisciplinary 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 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 the 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.