

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. Highly capable students exhibit outstanding abilities within their general intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, and/or creative productivities within a specific domain. These students are present both 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 shall be employed to find students who may qualify for potential highly capable services:

Referral

Referrals are available for all grade levels not being universally screened, and may be submitted by teachers, other staff, parents, students, and members of the community. Persons referring a student for consideration for highly capable services will use the district's referral form.

Universal Screening

The district will conduct universal screenings at two elementary grade levels to identify students who may qualify for highly capable services; referrals are not required for those grades.

Universal screening must occur once in or before second grade, and again in or before leaving elementary, either fifth or sixth grade. The purpose of universal screening is to include students who traditionally are not referred for highly capable services. The district will consider at least two student data points during universal screening, which may include previously administered objective standardized, classroom-based performance, cognitive, or achievement assessments.

Assessment

The district will obtain written, electronic, or verbal parental permission prior to conducting additional assessments for highly capable screening. The district policy for identifying highly capable students prioritizes equitable identification of low-income students.

Students will be assessed using multiple objective criteria. The district must base the assessment

process upon a comprehensive review of each student's capability as shown by multiple criteria, from a wide variety of sources and data, intended to reveal each student's unique needs and capabilities. The assessment criterion consists of both qualitative and quantitative data which may include cognitive ability tests, general ability tests, intellectual ability tests, benchmark assessments, summative and formative assessments, teacher, parent, or community member comments, and work samples. All collected data will be compiled into a centralized record, providing a complete profile of the student's abilities throughout the assessment process.

The district will have identification procedures for their highly capable services that are clearly stated and implemented by the district using the following criteria:

- A. The district will use multiple objective criteria to identify students who are determined to need services. Multiple pathways for qualifications must be available and no single criterion may disqualify a student from identification.
- B. The district will base highly capable selection decisions on criteria local and national norm benchmarks. The district will not use local norms as a more restrictive criterion than national norms at the same percentile.
- C. The district will not use subjective measures, such as teacher recommendations or report card grades to screen out a student from assessment or to disqualify a student from identification. However, the district may use these data points alongside other criteria during selection to support identification.
- D. To the extent practical, the district will give screening and assessments in the native language of the student. If native language screening and assessments are not available, the district will use a nonverbal screening and assessment.

The district will record qualifying test results in the student's cumulative file.

Any screenings or additional assessments will be conducted within the school day and at the school the student attends. On a case-by-case basis and with the consent of the parent or guardian, the district may offer student screenings or additional assessment opportunities during the summer, outside of school hours, or at an alternative site.

Selection

A multidisciplinary 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 referred students. The multidisciplinary selection committee is composed of:

- A. A specialized teacher, a teacher trained in delivering highly capable instruction (however if a specialized teacher is not available, a classroom teacher shall be appointed).
- B. A psychologist or other qualified practitioner with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results.
- C. A certificated coordinator or administrator with the responsibility for the supervision of the district's highly capable services.

D. Additional professionals, if any, that the district deems desirable.

The multidisciplinary selection committee will evaluate the results of the universal screening, any further individual student assessment, and any available district data and make the selection decision based on:

- A. A preponderance of evidence from the profile data demonstrating that a student requires accelerated learning and enhanced instruction and is significantly highly capable.
- B. Evidence of clear need for highly capable services.

A single assessment score or indicator will not prevent a student's selection for highly capable services; 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, academic, or achievement.

The district will:

- Notify parents of students selected for HiCap services. Parents will receive a full explanation of the procedures for identification, information on the district's services, and the options that are available to identified students;
- When services require a student to attend a different building, parent or guardian consent will be obtained before any change in placement;
- Hold an informational meeting for all parents/ guardians of newly identified highly capable students;
- Annually review each HiCap students' educational services.

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, academic levels and/or outstanding intellectual, academic, or creative abilities.

Parents/legal guardians must submit the appeal request and supporting evidence to the Highly Capable coordinator within 10 school days of the multi-disciplinary selection committee's decision notification.

The district's appeals committee will review the student's file, assessment profile data, and additional evidence provided in the request for appeal. The Appeals Committee is composed of: the Highly Capable Coordinator, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning or other district administrator, school psychologist, teacher, and additional professionals.

The decision of the appeal multi-disciplinary selection committee may include:

- Upholding the original decision of the multidisciplinary selection committee or reversing the decision of the multidisciplinary selection committee.

The appeals committee will make a decision within 30 school days after receipt of written request for reconsideration. The Highly Capable coordinator will notify the parent/legal guardian of the decision in writing. The parent/ legal guardian may appeal the decision of the appeals committee to the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning or designee in writing within 10 school days of receipt of the appeals committee decision. The Executive Director of Teaching and Learning or designee will decide within 30 school days after receipt of a written request for reconsideration. The decision of the Executive Director or designee is final.

Request to Decline HiCap Services

Upon the request of a parent/guardian or the district, the district may initiate the adjustment of HiCap services for students who no longer demonstrate a need for highly capable services.

Highly Capable Service Models

The district will make a variety of appropriate services available to highly capable students. Once services are started, the district will provide a continuum of services to highly capable students in grades K-12. The district will keep on file a description of the educational services provided for identified students. The district reviews services annually.

The district will offer highly capable students the following services:

1. Elementary Models

All Highly Capable students are encouraged to participate in afterschool activities/ clubs like Girls on the Run, STEM, and leadership opportunities as they are offered throughout the school year.

Lower Elementary

- 1st -2nd grade students who were identified in the prior school year will be clustered together with one teacher at their grade level when possible at their regular school. Cluster teachers will provide differentiated instruction, activities and assignments.

Grade 3rd – 5th Models

Model 1 – Self Contained

- Highly Capable students in grades 3 - 5 are invited to attend a full day self-contained Highly Capable class, SOAR (Students of Accelerated Rigor), with all other identified Highly Capable students at a designated school.
- At SOAR classes will be created based on current numbers of identified Highly Capable students.
- Highly Capable students will have one teacher all day; recess and lunch with grade level peers.
- Highly Capable students will have PE/music/library just as other classes do within the building.
- Transportation will be provided; Highly Capable school now becomes "home" school for Highly Capable students.
- Teachers are under same supervision/schedule as all teachers in that building.

Model 2 – Enrichment in Neighborhood School

- Highly Capable students in grades 3-5 may opt to remain at their neighborhood school.
- Highly Capable students will be clustered with other grade level HiCap identified students as available.
- Classroom teachers will provide differentiation within the general education classroom.

*If the elementary services above do not meet the academic need of the highly capable student, whole grade acceleration may be considered. See Acceleration Overview section for more information.

2. Secondary Models

Middle School Models - Grades 6th - 8th

- Highly Capable students may be clustered together in a grade level Advance Language Arts.
- Students who qualify for Math services may be eligible for Advanced Math 6, Advanced Math 7, and Algebra.
- 8th grade Highly Capable students will have priority placement in all available advanced classes. Students will be clustered together by subject as scheduling permits.
- Counselors will review and document Highly Capable student course selection each year with attention to rigor and academic acceleration.
- Highly Capable students are encouraged to take advantage of challenging courses, extracurricular activities, and leadership opportunities.

*If the middle school services above do not meet the academic need of the highly capable student, whole grade or single subject acceleration may be considered. See Acceleration Overview section for more information.

High School Model Grade: 9th – 12th:

- Counselors will review and document Highly Capable student course selection each year with attention to rigor and academic acceleration.
- The High School and Beyond Plan will be reviewed by advisors, students and parents/guardians each year. Counselors will meet with each identified HiCap student and review credits, future coursework, and personal academic pathway, with attention to rigor and academic acceleration. These conversations will be documented.
- Highly Capable students are encouraged to take advantage of courses, which if successfully completed, will earn the student high school and college credit. All courses are taught using a college level curriculum. Course offerings are subject to change.
- Advanced Placement classes (AP) offering include, but are not limited to:

AP 2D studio art (photo or graphics tech)	AP Macroeconomics
AP Art History	AP Microeconomics
AP Biology	AP Human Geography
AP Calculus AB	AP Music Theory
AP Chemistry	AP Physics
AP Computer Science	AP Psychology
AP Computer Science Principles	AP Statistics AP

AP English Language & Comp. (11)
AP English Literature & Comp. (12)
AP European History
AP Environmental Science

AP Languages (French, Japanese)
AP U.S. Gov. & Politics
AP Research/AP Seminar/AP Capstone
AP Seminar
AP U.S. History

- College in the High School.
- Running Start- This is a partnership between the high school and community college/ vocational schools.
- Highly Capable students are encouraged to take advantage of challenging courses, extracurricular activities, and leadership opportunities.

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) that includes:

- A. Number of students served by grade level K-12;
- B. Student demographic information.
- C. Data to determine if students who are highly capable met the goals set and if the services provided met the academic needs of these students;
- D. Number and content of professional development activities provided for special teachers and general education staff;
- E. Evaluation data and, if needed, service/ placement changes that will be made based upon this information.

3. Acceleration Overview: K-8th

The district provides access to acceleration to highly capable students who demonstrate a need for acceleration. Acceleration may include whole grade advancement (K-8th) or subject-based acceleration (6-8th) for students who demonstrate readiness for instruction beyond their current grade level.

To start the process for possible acceleration, requests should be emailed to the district Highly Capable office.

Decisions regarding acceleration will be made by the district level MDSC. For acceleration requests, the MDSC will be expanded to include the receiving grade level or subject area teacher (or instructional specialist) and the receiving building administrator.

The MDSC will conduct a comprehensive and holistic review of each student's capability through a structured evaluation process to verify readiness for higher-level placement, the district may administer additional assessments. Quantitative and qualitative data, including cognitive ability tests, achievement assessments, parent and teacher observations, and student work samples, will be compiled into a data portfolio.

Following this data collection phase, the MDSC will convene to review the full body of evidence.

The committee will make a formal recommendation for acceleration based on a preponderance of evidence demonstrating that the student requires a more rigorous academic placement than can be provided at the current grade level.

Math Acceleration (6th-8th)

Math acceleration, beyond current single acceleration model, is available for students demonstrating the need for a double accelerated or beyond pathway. To bypass a Math course, beyond the single acceleration model, students must demonstrate proficiency and mastery of the content through a comprehensive review. The data portfolio listed above can include, but are not limited to:

- Benchmark and Summative Assessments
- Mastery-Based Assessments
- Diagnostic Assessments
- Curriculum Based/Classroom Assessments

Whole Grade Acceleration (K–8)

Whole grade acceleration, or "grade skipping," is an intensive intervention designed for students who demonstrate academic and social-emotional readiness to move ahead of their chronological peers. To ensure an objective review of the "whole child," the MDSC will review the data portfolio listed above and consider additional factors that can include, but are not limited to:

- Academic Ability
- Aptitude and Achievement (see the math specific criteria above)
- Social-Emotional Maturity
- Sibling Factors
- Student Motivation

Single Subject and Whole Grade Acceleration Service Delivery Options

The district will provide multiple service delivery options to ensure an optimal match between student ability and instruction. Options may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical Placement: Moving to a higher-level classroom within the building or attending classes at the high school.
- Differentiated Materials: Implement rich tasks that foster deep conceptual understanding and problem-solving.
- Virtual/Online Courses: Engaging in coursework through online learning platforms.

Process for Acceleration Appeal

Parents/legal guardians have the right to appeal a decision made by the multidisciplinary selection committee regarding a student's eligibility for grade-level or subject-area acceleration.

To initiate an appeal, parents/legal guardians must submit a completed appeals form to the Highly Capable Coordinator within 10 school days of receiving the committee's decision. The written appeal must include:

- The reasons for the appeal; and
- Additional evidence supporting the student's readiness for acceleration, such as documentation of academic readiness, cognitive ability, and/or social-emotional preparedness.

The district's appeal committee will review the student's complete file, including assessment data, acceleration readiness indicators, and any additional evidence submitted. The appeal committee will issue one of the following decisions:

- Uphold the original decision of the multidisciplinary selection committee; or
- Reverse the decision and recommend grade-level or subject-area acceleration.

The appeal committee will notify the parent/legal guardian of its decision in writing within 30 school days of receiving the appeal.

If the parent/legal guardian disagrees with the appeal committee's decision, they may submit a written request for further reconsideration to the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning (or designee) within 10 school days of receiving the appeal committee's decision. The Executive Director or designee will issue a final decision within 30 school days of receiving the written request. This decision is final and not subject to further appeal.

Legal References: Chapter 392-170 WAC, Chapter 28A.185 RCW

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