Highline Public Schools
Highly Capable Annual Plan, 2026-2027

This plan was developed by members of the Highly Capable team in August 2026 in response to the state's annual form 1 for Highly Capable funding. This plan is shared on the Highline Public Schools website in communication with schools and families. Questions related to any aspect of this plan may be directed to highlycapable@highlineschools.org.

Sections:

1. Mission, Vision, and Values
2. Identification Process: Notification, Screening/Referral, Assessment, Identification & Placement, 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, and engagement with students, families, and staff, 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
- Support the social emotional needs of Highly Capable learners
- Implement the Washington State legislation related to Highly Capable

To realize this vision, the district is building a strong multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) and supporting the implementation of personalized learning communities (PLC's) within schools. The

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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

In addition, all schools in Highline implement an instructional approach called Standards-based Instruction and Standards-based Grading, which focuses on students' progress toward clearly defined rigorous Washington State learning standards. Teachers regularly communicate with students about their learning progress and provide appropriate support and challenge based on individual needs. For students who are meeting standard, instruction is designed to deepen understanding, increase complexity, and promote higher levels of thinking. 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.

Highline is also committed to being an inclusive school system where every student has access to the support they need to succeed. This includes building a continuum of services and supports at every school, reducing barriers to access, and addressing historical and ongoing disparities in identification and placement that have affected students based on race, ethnicity, language status, disability, disciplinary history, and other factors. We believe students thrive when they learn alongside a diverse group of peers and when schools are equipped with the beliefs, skills, and systems needed to meet individual needs within inclusive learning environments. These experiences help prepare students for success in school, college, careers, and civic life.

As we work toward these goals for all students, we also recognize our responsibility to meet the unique needs of students who qualify for Highly Capable services. Highline is committed to identifying and supporting these students through services that provide the advanced learning opportunities and academic challenge they need to continue growing.

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 by considering 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 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 five years, specifically for identified students in grades 2 through 8.

We acknowledge we are far from our goal of ensuring that our Highly Capable services more closely represent the student population of Highline Public Schools.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	**HPS 2026-27** % of HPS enrollment grades 2-8
	289 Students	246 Students	222 Students	236 Students	276 Students	8803 Students
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	<1%
Asian	18%	19%	21%	22%	21%	15%
Black or African American	6%	6%	5%	3%	6%	15%
Hispanic	10%	12%	10%	11%	13%	40%
Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian	0%	0%	<1%	1%	1%	4%
Two or More Races	11%	9%	10%	14%	15%	9%
White	55%	54%	53%	48%	43%	16%
Multilingual Services	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	39%
Serviced by an IEP	9%	5%	5%	6%	6%	19%

The strategies that will be employed to further equitable identification will include:

- Highly capable screener: We will continue the use of local norms by school for grades universally tested.

- Intentional outreach to staff: We will continue to engage in school-focused outreach to ensure teachers and staff in our schools understand the common characteristics 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 2026-27 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.
- Communication is sent via our district's electronic communication tool to families notifying them of the Highly Capable screening and identification process. 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 in the preferred language to home 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 Washington State legislation regarding Highly Capable identification and placement.
For the 2026-2027 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. Identification decisions will be based on the review of multiple kinds of evidence/data by the Multidisciplinary Placement Committee. This committee 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 current and historical student performance metrics and measures that demonstrate significant areas of growth.

A parent/guardian, teacher, principal, another staff member, other student, or a community member may refer students for consideration of Highly Capable services. The online referral form will be available on Highline's Highly Capable website. A referral is to provide more information about a student's strengths, not a request for testing.

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 4th graders as an additional data measure to determine whether a student needs 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.

Identification for kindergarten and 1st grade students is based on teacher observation and classroom assessments, and services are only for the current school year. Students will need to go through the identification process the following year to be eligible for future services.

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Assessment

The following data points are considered as a part of our identification process for 2026-2027 which takes place in the Spring:

	1	2-3	4-5	6-7
i-Ready Inform, Placement and Growth (Reading and Math)	X	X	X	X
Naglieri General Ability Tests (Verbal, Nonverbal, Quantitative)	X	X	X	X
Past Naglieri General Ability Tests (Verbal, Nonverbal, Quantitative)		X	X	X
Smarter Balanced Assessments (ELA and Math)			X	X
SchoolPace (IRLA and ENIL) or iReady Literacy Tasks	X	X	X	
WIDA (when available)	X	X	X	X

In this process, we look at the confluence of data based on the recommendations of the Multi-Disciplinary Placement 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 Reading and Mathematics. The assessment focuses on student mastery of and growth in state learning standards.
- The Naglieri General Ability Tests (NGAT) are nonverbal measures of general ability for school-aged children. They provide information regarding students' cognitive abilities and reasoning skills. The NGAT have been developed to combat the challenges in the identification of high ability students with limited English language proficiency. The NGAT features language free animated test instructions and item content that has been designed to reduce the demand for academic knowledge and allow students to solve problems regardless of the language they speak. This assessment addresses RCW 28A.300.770: To the extent practicable, screening and assessments must be given in the native language of the student. If native language screening and assessments are not available, a nonverbal screening and assessment must be used.
- The Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) 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 3rd grade.
- The SchoolPace assessments are a pair of formative assessments designed to measure reading level. The Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) measures English reading and the Evaluacion del Nivel Independiente de Lectura (ENIL) measures Spanish reading. ENIL levels are only measured at Dual Language schools.

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Identification & Placement

Using the available data at the time of identification, the Multidisciplinary Placement Committee meets in the Spring to review the data and collection of evidence to make recommendations for students who are in need of 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 2026-2027, we will continue to ask teachers to provide insight on student strengths and needs through the use of a culturally responsive survey. Information gathered from the survey 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 2026-2027, families 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 into other languages as needed.

For all students who participate in our identification process and are determined there is a need for services, a letter is sent home in the family's primary language of choice. Families are contacted via Highline's communication tool if their student is identified for services. Families are given the opportunity to decline services through an online form. Families may also call or email Highly Capable to decline services.

A parent/guardian may file an appeal if their student is found to be ineligible for Highly Capable services. A formal appeal should be submitted using the online appeal form available on the Highly Capable webpage. The Multidisciplinary Placement Committee will review all appeals and communicate the decision in writing to the family via email.

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 2026-2027 services in grades 2-8 include:

- **Highly Capable Service Plan** - The Highly Capable Learning Plan (grades 2-7) provides student services at their neighborhood school. Teachers look at students' 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 digital platform, students develop a personalized portfolio and 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.

- **Earned Honors** - Earned Honors provides student services at their neighborhood school and is available at Highline's five comprehensive middle schools including Highline Virtual Academy.

  Earned Honors focuses on rigorous content taught in grade level classes. Teachers provide differentiated instruction to allow students to find appropriate challenge and deepen the learning for students who are meeting standards and showing potential to benefit from enhanced work based on their strengths and learning needs. Students are given ongoing opportunities throughout a unit to demonstrate exceeding knowledge and skills and are encouraged to stretch their learning.

Highly capable 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 and to engage in level 4 learning.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** - honors learner variability and addresses barriers that may arise for students who are ready for challenge
- **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 in need of 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.

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

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assessments. In addition, we will administer a survey to all families who have a child that receives Highly Capable services. The survey will collect feedback which will inform our yearly evaluation process.