

Highly Capable Programs

In order to develop the abilities of each Highly Capable Program student, the district will offer a highly capable program that provides kindergarten through twelfth grade students who are selected for the program with access to basic education programs that accelerate learning and enhance instruction. The framework for such programs will encompass, but not be limited to, the following objectives:

- A. Expansion of academic attainments and intellectual skills;
- B. Stimulation of intellectual curiosity, independence and responsibility;
- C. Development of a positive attitude toward self and others; and
- D. 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 highly capable program and general education staff; program evaluation; a fiscal report; and assurances that the district is legally compliant.

The superintendent/designee will establish procedures consistent with state guidelines for nomination/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 low-income students; use of multiple objective criteria and multiple pathways for identification; use of local norms, unless more restrictive than national norms; use of subjective measures only to support identification; and use of screening and assessment in the student's native language (if available) or nonverbal assessment.

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

Management Resources:

2018 – August Issue

Policy and Legal News, September 2013 Highly Capable Program WAC overhauled

Policy News, April 2008 Highly Capable Programs

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Washougal School District

Revised: 10.12.10; 04.23.13; 05.24.14; 11.27.18

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 within a specific domain. These students are present both in the general populace and are present 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 district will employ the following procedures to refer/nominate, assess, and select students to participate in the program.

Referral/Nomination

The district accepts referrals for students in grades K-12 based on data or evidence from teachers and other staff. Persons referring a student for consideration for admission into the program will use the district's referral/nomination form. The information will be collected by the highly capable program coordinator for blind review (no name) by the multidisciplinary selection committee.

Screening

The district will screen each nominee/referred student to identify students who qualify for further assessment. Screening criteria may include the following:

- District benchmark assessments
- State outcome assessments
- Other district assessments (i.e. PSAT, SAT, ACT)
- Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test 3 (NNAT3)

Assessment

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

District practices for identifying the most highly capable students must prioritize equitable identification of low-income students.

The district will assess students referred/nominated through the screening process using multiple objective criteria. The district must base the assessment process upon a review of each referred student's capability as shown by multiple criteria, from a wide variety of sources and data, intended to reveal each referred student's unique needs and capabilities. The assessment criterion consists of both qualitative and quantitative instruments and may include:

- CogAT 7, and in addition may include:
 - Teacher reports
 - Student work samples
 - Student portfolios
 - Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test 3 (NNAT3)

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

- a) Districts must use multiple objective criteria to identify students who are among the most highly capable. Multiple pathways for qualifications must be available and no single criterion may disqualify a student from identification;
- (b) The district must base highly capable selection decisions on consideration of criteria benchmarked on local norms, but 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; and
- (d) To the extent practicable, the district must give screening and assessments in the native language of the student. If native language screening and assessments are not available, the district must use a nonverbal screening and assessment.

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

Selection

A multi-disciplinary selection team 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/nominated students. The multi-disciplinary selection committee is composed of: a special teacher (however, 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 multi-disciplinary selection committee will evaluate individual student assessment profile data using a blind (no name) process 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, multiple 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:

- A. Notify parents of the students 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
- 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.

Parents/legal guardians must submit the appeal request and supporting evidence to Kathlynn Sloop; Highly Capable Program Coordinator; 4855 Evergreen Way, Washougal, WA, 98671, within ten (10) school days of the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee's decision notification.

The district's Appeals Committee composed of an administrator from the district office and Multidisciplinary Selection Committee Members will review the student's file, assessment profile data, and additional evidence provided in the request for appeal.

The decision of the Appeals/Multidisciplinary Selection Committee may include:

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

The Appeals Committee will make a decision within thirty (30) school days after receipt of written request for reconsideration and will notify the parent/legal guardian of the decision in writing. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

Exit Process

Upon the request of a teacher or a highly capable program administrator, the district may initiate the exit process for students who no longer demonstrate a need for highly capable program services. The Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee will convene a meeting to review the student's profile to determine if the student qualifies for program services based on assessment data and selection criteria. The Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee may request additional evidence of student capabilities and/or willingness to participate in the program. If the committee determines that the student no longer qualifies for highly capable program services, it may recommend that the student be exited from the program. The district will notify the parent in writing of the committee's decision and of the appeal's process.

A parent/legal guardian may request to withdraw the student from the program, or a student 18 years or older may request a withdrawal from the program. A meeting will be convened by the Highly Capable Program Coordinator/Director to discuss the request. If the parent/legal guardian desires to withdraw a student from the program, the district will exit the student from the program on the date parents/guardian signed the program exit form. If a student exits from the program, the student must complete the nomination process again to reenter the program.

Program Design

The district will make a variety of appropriate program services to students who participate in the program. Once services are started, the district will provide a continuum of services 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 at least 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), that 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 (determined by an annual meeting between parent/guardian and a WSD staff member);
- Number and content of professional development activities provided for special teachers and general education staff; and

**Date: 02.16; 01.20
Washougal School District**