

Highly Capable Program

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 student's 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:

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 refer, assess and select students to participate in the program:

Referrals

Referrals are permitted and accepted based on data and/or evidence from teachers, other staff, parents, students, and members of the community. Student supporters will use the district's referral form to refer a student to be considered for admission in the program.

Assessment

The district will obtain written parental permission prior to conducting assessments to determine eligibility for participation in the Highly Capable Program (HCP) found in the Referral Packet.

During the testing window, students identified through the referral process will be assessed using the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test-Second Edition. This assessment will be administered once per student applicant. 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.

Selection

A multidisciplinary selection committee will review data that has been collected for each of the referred students. 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; a school administrator; and additional professionals if any, that the district deems desirable.

The district level multidisciplinary selection committee will evaluate individual student assessment profile data using a blind (no name) process after each testing window. The selection decision is 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 test 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 multidisciplinary selection committee will review all applications and make one of two determinations:

QUALIFIED PLACEMENT - The student qualifies under the criteria of most highly capable and will be placed in program.

NO PLACEMENT: According to the data, the student is not considered eligible for placement within the program.

The district will:

- A. Notify parents of students who have been placed. Parents will receive an 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.
- B. Schedule and conduct a meeting annually for parent review.

Process for Appeal

Parents/legal guardians have the right to appeal the Multidisciplinary Committee's decision. Individuals appealing the selection committee's decision must submit a completed appeals form or letter requesting review of placement decision within the district Annual Notification schedule available online or building. 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. Appeals must be based upon one of the following conditions:

- A condition or circumstance believed to have caused a misinterpretation of the testing results. i.e., incorrect birthdate or grade level used in calculating the student's score.
- An extraordinary and temporary circumstance that negatively affected the validity of the test results.

The appeal request and supporting evidence must be submitted to **Theresa Laffey, Executive Director of Student and Family Center, 105 N 4th Ave. Yakima, WA 98902** within **30** school days of the Multidisciplinary Committee's decision notification.

Requests without additional documentation providing examples of Highly Capable characteristics will be returned. The requestor will have 30 business days of receiving notification, to submit a complete appeal.

The *Multidisciplinary 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 Committee;
- Reversing the decision of the Multidisciplinary Committee;

A decision will be made within 30 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 Multidisciplinary Selection Committee is final.

Exit Process

The exit process may be initiated for students who no longer demonstrate a need for highly capable program services. A request may be made by a teacher or program administrator for highly capable student identification and placement discontinuation. The Multidisciplinary 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 Multidisciplinary 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 be recommended that the student exited from the program.

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 Director 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 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 proved 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.

The district will offer highly capable students a variety and continuum of program services such as: differentiation, flexible grouping, independent study, enrichment, independent projects, supplemental instruction in area of interest, content acceleration, and supplemental materials in the area of interest.

Reporting

Placed 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.

Cross References:

(cf.: 0520 – Student Learning Environment and District Commitment)
(cf.: 2000 – Goals: Mission Statement; School Improvement Programs)
(cf.: 2001 – Academic Standards)
(cf.: 2002 – Assessment of Academic Standards)
(cf.: 2012 – Equity in Education)
(cf.: 2111 – Instruction Basic Skills and Work Skills)

Legal References:

RCW 28A.185.030 Programs–Authority of local school districts–Selection of students

WAC 392-170 Special service program–Highly capable students

Adoption Date:

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