

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

No. P-2190

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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 district will employ the following procedures to find students who may qualify for potential placement in the program:

Referral

The district will conduct universal screenings to find students who may qualify for potential highly capable program placement. Referrals are available for all grade levels not being universally screened, and may be submitted by teachers, other staff, parents, and students.

Screening

The district will select a grade level to implement universal screening procedures for each student. Universal screening must occur once in or before second grade, and again in or before sixth grade. The purpose of universal screening is to include students who traditionally are not referred for highly capable programs and services. Students discovered during universal screening may need further assessment to determine whether the student is eligible for placement in a program for highly capable students. The District will consider at least two student data points during universal screening, which may include previously administered standardized, classroom-based performance, cognitive, or achievement assessments, or research-based behavior ratings scales.

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.

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The district will assess students identified for further testing through the universal screening process using multiple objective criteria. The district must base the assessment process upon a review of each 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.

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.

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 multi-disciplinary 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 multi-disciplinary selection committee will be 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 and make the selection decision based on:

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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:

- 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.
- B. 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 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 the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning at 364 S Park St within 10 school days of the Multi-Disciplinary 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 Appeals Committee is composed of: Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, a special teacher (highly capable); psychologist or other qualified practitioner with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results; a certificated coordinator/administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's program for highly capable students; and such additional professionals (one teacher from each elementary building, middle school and Walla Walla High School, an elementary and middle school principal).

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 10 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 the final decision.

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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 may voluntarily withdraw 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 the student from the program, the district will exit the student from the program. The multi-disciplinary 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, 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 annually for each student to ensure that the services are appropriate.

The district will offer highly capable students the following programs:

- Students in kindergarten through second grade, identified as Highly Capable, are served through the Response to Intervention (RtI) model in their home schools. The elementary principal or designee will work with classroom teachers to provide appropriate accelerated/enhanced learning opportunities. K-2 classroom/program options could include, but not be limited to: alternative activities, enrichment activities, flexible group learning, independent projects, advanced lessons, online or supplemental instruction.
- For grades three through five, Highly Capable students can be served by Explorers, a pull-out program focusing on enriched Science and Mathematics academic experiences. Students may also be served under the RtI model at their home schools.
- The middle school Highly Capable Honors classes focus on the subject areas of English, Language Arts and Social Studies. Elementary school services are incorporated into the school

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day through separate self-contained Explorer Program classes. Students are involved in inquiry-based lessons, group problem-solving settings, independent investigations and group discussions. Middle school Highly Capable students have an opportunity to take different levels of mathematics classes based on their ability, test scores and recommendations from teachers. This same opportunity is extended to all students in grades six through eight at both middle schools.

- Students previously identified as Highly Capable and transitioning to ninth grade will meet with high school counselors (or principal's designee) for the purpose of course selection and access to advanced instruction. Teachers of high school Highly Capable students will know who has been identified and will be provided with professional development and/or instructional suggestions through the high school RtI team. Services for high school students can include, but are not limited to, honors or Advanced Placement classes, Running Start, independent study or online classes.
- Previously identified transfer students, with proof of program acceptance, will be scheduled according to their educational needs in the academic focus areas of Mathematics, Science, Language Arts and Social Studies. New students lacking transcripts or proof of program acceptance will be given placement tests to help determine appropriate placement and/or the need for further testing.

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;
- Number and content of professional development activities provided for special teachers and general education staff; and
- Program evaluation data and, if needed, program changes that will be made based upon this information.

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