

CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION

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. 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.

Nomination Process

Annual public notification of parents and students shall be made before any major identification activity. Such notice shall be published or announced in multiple ways and in appropriate languages in school and District publications or other media intended to reach the maximum audience.

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

Screening

All students nominated for the Highly Capable Program may be screened for eligibility. Screening procedures must be applied equitably and systematically to all nominated students. Screening procedures may eliminate students for whom there exists clear, current evidence that the student will not qualify for eligibility.

Assessment

The District will obtain written parental permission prior to conducting assessments to determine eligibility for participation in its Highly Capable Program.

Nominees identified for further testing through the screening process will be assessed using multiple objective criteria. 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. The assessment criterion consists of both qualitative and quantitative instruments and may include a cognitive abilities test and/or achievement test.

Test results will be recorded in the student's cumulative file.

Nondiscrimination

All tests and other evaluation materials used in the assessment shall have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and shall accurately reflect whatever factors the tests are designed to measure.

Selection

A multi-disciplinary selection committee will review data that has been collected for each of the nominated students. A multi-disciplinary selection committee is composed of: a Highly Capable Program teacher (provided that if a special education 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 Specialist 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.

A multi-disciplinary selection committee will evaluate individual student assessment profile data using a blind (no name) process. 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 Highly Capable Program; 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.

Following selection, the District will:

1. Notify parents of students who have been 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.

2. Obtain parental permission to place identified students in the program before any special services and programs are provide to the student;
3. Place students in the designated program or class(es) for which they were selected.

Appeal Process

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 any outside standardized assessment data that represents evidence of significantly advanced cognitive or academic levels and/or outstanding intellectual, academic or creative abilities.

The appeal request and supporting evidence must be submitted to the Highly Capable Program Specialist by the second Friday in June.

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 Program Specialist, two administrators, a Highly Capable Program teacher (provided that if a special education teacher is not available, a classroom teacher shall be appointed), and a psychologist or other qualified practitioner with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results.

The decision of the appeals/multidisciplinary selection committee may include:

1. Upholding the original decision of the multi-disciplinary selection committee;
2. Reversing the decision of the multi-disciplinary selection committee;

A decision will be made by the appeals committee within ten school business days after the final due date of written appeals. The parent/legal guardian will be notified of the decision in writing. The decision of the appeals 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. A multi-disciplinary committee will convene a meeting to review the student's profile to determine if the placement and services are appropriate for the student, based on academic, social/emotional, behavioral and/or attendance information. The multi-disciplinary 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 is exited from the program. The parent will be notified in writing of the committee's decision and any steps to appeal the decision will be provided.

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 Specialist or school administrator 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. A 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 available to students who participate in the program. Once services are started, a continuum of services will be provided 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 students the following program alternatives that support a continuum of services, within the limit of resources provided by the state as appropriate for grade levels K-12. These may include, but are not limited to: accelerated learning opportunities; academic grouping arrangements that provide intellectual and interest peer group interactions; self-contained programs in all elementary schools; middle school honors courses; accelerated math placement in middle school; high school honors and Advanced Placement courses; advanced courses in CTE (including Tech Prep) and the arts; Running Start; and College in the High School.

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) which includes

1. Number of students served by grade level K-12
2. Student demographic information
3. 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;
4. Number and content of professional development activities provided for special teachers and general education staff;
5. Program evaluation data and, if needed, program changes that will be made based upon this information; and
6. Final Fiscal report that reports on activities and staff funded by this program.

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