

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 are seen within student's 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 refer assess and select students to participate in the program:

Nomination/Referral Process

The district accepts referrals based on data or evidence from teachers, other staff, parents, students and members of the community. Persons referring a student for consideration for admission into the program will use the district's referral form.

Screening Process

The district will screen each nominee using academic assessment data to identify students who qualify for further assessment. Screeners for K-12 students include the following:

- DIBELS Next (K-2)
- STAR Reading (K-5)
- STAR Math (applicable grades)
- Reading Inventory (6-8)
- Math Inventory (6-8)
- ELPA 21 (K-12 if applicable)
- Classroom-based assessments (K-12 if applicable)

Assessment Process

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 identified for further testing 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 consist of both qualitative and quantitative instruments and may include:

- Cognitive Abilities (CogAT7)
- WA Kids
- Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA)
- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
- Torrance Test of Creative Thinking
- Research-based rating scales include Scales for Identifying Gifted Students, 2004 (SIGS)
- Teacher and parent rating scales

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. District 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 Process

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 students. The multi-disciplinary selection committee is composed of: a special teacher, 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:

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 may not prevent a student's selection for the Highly Capable Program; however, individual pieces of evidence can indicate that the student would benefit from services. If properly validated tests are not available, the professional judgment of the qualified district personnel will determine eligibility of the student based upon evidence of cognitive and/or academic achievement.

The district will:

- A. Notify parents of 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 of 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.

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 appeal 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 Grounds for appeal include, but are not limited to; errors in scoring, testing bias against student who are members of a protected class, and special circumstances including unique, untestable characteristics evident in student performances or products.

The appeal request and supporting evidence must be submitted to the Superintendent or designee within ten school days of the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee's decision notification. The district's multi-disciplinary selection committee will review the student's file, assessment profile data, and additional evidence provided in the request for appeal.

The decision of the committee may include:

- Upholding the original decision of the Committee;
- Reversing the decision of the Committee:

The decision will be made by the Superintendent or designee within ten school days after receipt of the written request for reconsideration, and will notify the parent/legal guardian of the decision in writing. The parent/legal guardian will be notified of the decision in writing. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

Exit Process

A request may be made by a teacher or 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 be recommended that the student exited from the program. The parent will be notified in writing of the committee's decision and of the appeal's process.

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 Coordinator/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 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, 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.

Students in the Highly Capable Program will receive their services and specially designed instruction in the general education classroom. Instructional strategies and curricula modifications will be utilized to meet the students' needs. The strategies and modifications include differentiation, flexible grouping, enrichment, independent study, independent projects, and content acceleration. Advanced Placement options are available to middle and high school students. High school students have the option to receive college credits in the high school

The district utilizes a K-12 Highly Capable Liaison to support teachers, parents, and students. The District Highly Capable Liaison is available to provide professional development and/or assistance to staff members in the areas of instructional strategies and curricula modifications. The District Highly Capable Liaison is also available to work with students, parents, and staff members to develop program plans and a continuum of service options that address the individual needs and interests of students.

Program Evaluation

The Highly Capable Program will be evaluated annually. The evaluation will include a review of identification procedures, a review of data for effectiveness of program services to meet academic needs of HCP students, a review of practices that impact student achievement, and proposed practice changes as an outcome of the evaluation.

Reporting

Identified student 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 need 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

Date: 04.08; 12.11; 09.13; 09.17; 12.17.18; 10.06.2020