

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 students' 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 their chronological 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 nominate, assess and select students to participate in the program:

Nomination

Anyone may nominate a child to the program, including 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.

Assessment

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

The assessment process will be based upon a review of each nominee's capability as shown by multiple criteria, from a variety of sources and data, intended to reveal each nominee's unique needs and capabilities. The assessment criterion consists of both qualitative and quantitative (district may select one or both) instruments and may include: Cognitive Skills Test (CogAT), Smarter Balance Tests, NWEA MAP, DIBELS, and Renzulli Creativity Checklist. Test results will be recorded in the student's cumulative file.

Selection

A multi-disciplinary selection committee will determine eligibility of students to receive services. This committee will be composed of the following members: a special teacher (provided that if a special teacher is not available, a classroom teacher will be appointed); a psychologist or other qualified practitioner with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results; a certificated coordinator or administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's highly capable program; and additional professionals, if any, that the district deems desirable.

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 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 ability and/or academic achievement.

The district will:

- A. Notify parents of students who have been selected. Parents will receive a full explanation of the procedures for identification, the appeal process, procedures 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 will follow Eastmont School District Procedure 4220P.

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 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 be exited from the program. The parent will be notified in writing of the committee's decision and of the appeals 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 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 yearly to ensure that the services are appropriate.

Important components of a successful school year in the Highly Capable Program are the establishment of clearly stated and mutually understood program goals and student expectations.

It is anticipated that students placed in the Highly Capable program will be successful and maintain a standard level of performance required to remain in the program.

A standard level of performance includes:

- caring for and taking ownership of one's own education (learning);
- maintaining responsibility for one's academic success;
- working in a variety of situations; and
- maintaining a level of behavior within the classroom which does not hinder or interfere with the learning of self and/or other students

The district will offer highly capable students the following programs: extracurricular academic competitions, academic conferences, project/research clubs, honors courses, advanced placement courses, running start, and college in the classroom. Academic Options include but are not limited to: accelerated learning opportunities; academic grouping arrangements that provide intellectual and interest peer group interactions; cooperative agreements between K-12 and institutions of higher education and programs designed to share resources and facilities to maximize student learning and mentorships and career exploration.

Reporting

Identified students will be assigned the appropriate CEDARS Gifted value(s) in the district's student information system for 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.