

HIGHLY CAPABLE PROGRAM

In accordance with the philosophy to develop the special abilities of each student, the district shall offer appropriate instructional programs to meet the needs of highly capable students of school age. Students selected for the program will have access to basic education programs that accelerate learning and enhance instruction. The framework for such program shall encompass, but not be limited to, the following objectives.

- A. Bring together students of high ability in order to enable them to be challenged and stimulated by students of like ability
- B. Develop life-long learning processes and prepare students for learning opportunities at the secondary level and beyond; and
- C. Develop abilities and talents for both personal fulfillment and the benefit of society.

The board will annually approve the district’s highly capable plan which describes the number of students served by grade level; the district’s plan to identify students; program goals; instructional program description; professional development; program evaluation and fiscal report; and assurances that the district is legally compliant.

The superintendent shall establish procedures consistent with state guidelines for nominating, assessing and selecting children of demonstrated achievement or potential ability in terms of general intellectual ability, academic aptitude, and creative or productive thinking.

Legal References: RCW 28A.185.030

Programs—Authority of local school districts—Selection of students

WAC 392-107

Special service program—Highly capable students

Adoption Date: 02/06/07

Revised: 06/17/08; 06/17/14

Highly Capable Program

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.

Aberdeen School District's Highly Capable Program goal is to meet the unique academic, social and emotional needs of intellectually gifted students in grades K-12.

The following procedures shall be employed to nominate, assess and select students to participate in the program:

Nomination

The process begins by completing the nomination form. These forms are available in the main office at each school and in the District Office. Anyone may nominate a student for program consideration. Referrals are encouraged from parents, teachers, friends and the community. While nominations will be accepted at any time, testing takes place in the fall each year.

Prior to testing, a notice will be sent to the nominated student's parents informing them of upcoming program testing and requesting their return of Consent for Evaluation.

Assessment

District-wide testing of students takes place in the fall using the Otis Lennon Scholastic Abilities Test. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), a district-wide academic assessment, is administered in the fall and spring each year. Results from this test are used for screening and to provide additional information for the placement team. The state assessment test scores are also used to provide additional information if results are

available. A Teacher Rating Form is sent to the appropriate teacher(s) requesting pertinent information about the nominated student, if needed.

Selection

A Student Placement Team composed of the program administrator, a school psychologist or other individual who can interpret cognitive and achievement test results, an elementary principal, and teachers representing each school will review data that has been collected for each of the nominated students.

The student placement team 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.

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. Schedule a meeting of all such parents and students to formulate individual education plans, and
4. Conduct an annual parent meeting to review each student's educational plan.

Appeals

Parents/legal guardians have the right to appeal the student placement team's decision. Individuals appealing the decision must submit a completed appeals form or letter requesting review of the 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.

The appeal request and supporting evidence must be submitted to the director of the Teaching and Learning Department at 216 North G St. within 30 school days of the placement team's decision notification.

The district's student placement team will review the student's file, assessment profile data, and additional evidence provided in the request for appeal. The decision of the team may include:

1. Upholding the original decision, or
2. Reversing the decision.

A decision will be made within 45 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 student placement team 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. Prior to any decision to change the student's placement, parents will be notified and provided an opportunity to meet with the district administrator of the program and the building team to discuss the student's performance and possible change of placement. The student placement team 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 team may request additional evidence of student capabilities and/or willingness to participate in the program. If the team determines that gifted services are no longer appropriate to fit the student's needs 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 of the appeal 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 student placement team will determine if identification procedures are necessary for students wishing to re-enter 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 for each student to ensure that the services are appropriate.

When possible, students in K-6 will be clustered together in groups of two to five to intellectually challenge each other. Students in grades 7-12 will have Honors, AP,

Running Start/community college and/or online classes available. Instruction and curricula will be differentiated and designed to respond to the needs of the highly capable learner. Student learning plans will be formulated by the student, parent and the school's highly capable coordinator to provide support and opportunities for the student so as to develop his/her abilities and talents for life-long learning.

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.