

Highly Capable Program

Purpose

This procedure guides staff with implementing an instructional program for highly capable students, including referral, assessment and selection of students.

Scope

This procedure applies to administrators, staff, students, parents or guardians, community members and practitioners involved in the Highly Capable program.

Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Students who are highly capable are those 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.
- 1.2. Valley School District recognizes that highly capable students are present both in the general population and within all protected groups. Students who are highly capable may possess, but are not limited to, these learning characteristics:
 - (a) Capacity to learn with unusual depth of understanding, to retain what has been learned, and to transfer learning to new situations.
 - (b) Capacity and willingness to deal with increasing levels of abstraction and complexity earlier than other peers.
 - (c) Creative ability to make unusual connections among ideas and concepts.
 - (d) Ability to learn quickly in their area(s) of intellectual strength.
 - (e) Capacity for intense concentration and/or focus.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS

2.1. Annual Notification

Valley School District annually will notify parents or guardians (“parents”), students and community members of the opportunity to refer a student for the Highly Capable Program. The notice (Form 2190F12) will be published on district websites, in the district/community newsletter, on classroom web-pages, in school newsletters or handouts, and at local establishments.

2.2. Program Referrals

Anyone may refer a child in kindergarten through twelfth grade for participation in programs for the most highly capable students. The Highly Capable Program Coordinator will accept referrals, based on data or evidence from parents, students,

teachers and community members, at any time during the school year. School offices and websites will make available the referral/recommendation forms (2190F3, 2190F4, 2190F5 and 2190F6) for completion by parents or teachers.

2.3. **Identification**

2.3.1. Identification procedures will be based on the following guidelines:

- (a) The district will 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 will 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.
- (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.

2.4. **Screening**

2.4.1. The district will screen referred students to identify those who qualify or may need further assessment. District practices for identifying the most highly capable students will prioritize equitable identification of low-income students.

2.4.2. Kindergarten through twelfth grade students (K-12) will be screened utilizing the results of individual Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) or iReady Diagnostic testing, state assessments, and teacher observations. Based on teacher recommendations for further assessment, students will be referred to the Multi-Disciplinary Selection and Placement Committee for review and consideration for additional ability and/or creativity testing to determine the student's qualifications for participation in the program. Test results will be placed in the student's cumulative file.

2.4.2.1. Students will be assessed using the MAP or iReady exams a minimum of once a year and up to three times each year (benchmarking).

2.4.3. All current third grade students will be screened by the Highly Capable Program Coordinator utilizing a creativity test and/or an ability test, in combination with results of MAP or iReady testing provided each year. Test results will be placed in the student's cumulative file.

2.4.4. The Highly Capable Program Coordinator will collect MAP or iReady testing data, and state assessment data, from the appropriate sources. Students in the 98th percentile for any subject, based on the most current MAP or iReady score, and students scoring in the advanced range (Level 4) on the state assessments will be identified for referral to the Multi-Disciplinary Selection and Placement Committee.

2.5. **Assessment**

2.5.1. Students identified through the screening process may be further assessed, as necessary, using multiple objective criteria. The district will obtain written or electronic parental permission using Form 2190F1 prior to conducting assessments beyond initial screening to determine eligibility for participation.

2.5.2. The district will 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 student's unique needs and capabilities. The assessment criterion may consist of both qualitative and quantitative instruments, including tests that measure cognitive ability, academic achievement and evidence of exceptional creativity. Instruments used in the data collection process will meet the requirements of WAC 392-170-060.

2.5.2.1. All tests and other evaluation materials used in the assessment will have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and will accurately reflect whatever factors the tests purport to measure. 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. This professional judgment will be documented in writing.

2.5.2.2. Tests or sources used to assess or evaluate students may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (a) *Cognitive*: Naglieri Nonverbal Aptitude Test (NNAT2), Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- (b) *Academic Achievement*: State Assessments, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), iReady Diagnostic

(c) *Creativity Assessments*: Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)

(d) *Other Sources*: Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (Renzulli Scales); Portfolio work samples

3. PARENT OR GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION

- 3.1. Parents of students who do not meet the criteria for placement in the Highly Capable Program will be notified (Form 2190F2) and provided information about the appeal process.
- 3.2. Parents of students selected for the program will be notified and written permission for program participation will be obtained from parents prior to a student's placement in the Highly Capable Program and before programs are initiated (Form 2190F10).
- 3.3. Notification letters will include the following information, as appropriate:
 - (a) A full explanation of the procedures for identification of a student for entrance into the highly capable program.
 - (b) An explanation of the appeal process.
 - (c) An explanation of the procedures to exit a student from the program.
 - (d) Information on the district's program and the options that will be available to selected students.

4. SELECTION

- 4.1. Selection for the program will be based on professional judgment using multiple criteria and a preponderance of evidence from the profile data to determine which students will benefit the most from inclusion in the district's program. Eligibility and placement will be determined by a multi-disciplinary selection committee.
- 4.2. The Multi-Disciplinary Selection and Placement Committee will convene as needed to conduct identification and/or selection processes. Five of eight members present will be considered a quorum. The committee will be comprised of the following staff:
 - (a) Highly Capable Program Coordinator
 - (b) School Psychologist
 - (c) School Counselor
 - (d) One Paideia High School Teacher
 - (e) One Columbia Virtual Academy Teacher
 - (f) One Valley School K-5 Teacher

- (g) One Valley School 6-8 Teacher
 - (h) School Principals (non-voting member)
- 4.3. The Highly Capable Program Coordinator will consult the Identification Matrix (Form 2190F7) to calculate and record test scoring data for each student referral (Form 2190F8). All scoring data and other evidence collected for individual student referrals will be collated on the Data Collection Sheet (Form 2190F9) for review by the committee.
- 4.4. A single assessment score or indicator will not prevent a student's selection for the program; however, individual pieces of evidence, if strong enough, can indicate that the student would benefit from these services. Based on multiple criteria and professional judgment of the committee, a decision will be made to either place (include) a student in the Highly Capable Program, deny (exclude) participation, or collect further data.
- 4.4.1. Students who qualify for the Highly Capable Program are strong academic performers, scoring an overall average percentile of 98 or above based on the national grade percentile from the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), iReady Diagnostic, or state assessments in reading and mathematics, on the Naglieri Nonverbal Aptitude Test (NNAT2), Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), and/or on the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT).
- 4.5. Parents of students who have been selected for participation in the Highly Capable Program will be provided a copy of the procedures, including an explanation about student identification and selection, program options and the exiting process. Parents opting for student participation must provide enrollment information and written permission (Form 2190F10) for the district to initiate services and/or programs.
- 4.6. **Appeal Process**
- 4.6.1. Following notification of a child's assessment results indicating exclusion from the program, parents have the opportunity to appeal the decision (one time only). The appeal process may be initiated by submitting a written appeal statement (Form 2190F11) to the Highly Capable Program Coordinator.
- 4.6.2. Appeals must include written rationale for requesting the appeal and supportive details, such as:
- (a) A copy of the student's most recent report card.
 - (b) Assessments or evaluations conducted independently, out-of-district that haven't already been considered.
 - (c) A brief letter describing any additional factors for the attention of the selection committee.

- 4.6.3. The committee will consider information that indicates the program test results were not representative of a student's skills, knowledge, or ability. Teachers may be asked to provide additional information.
- 4.6.4. The committee's decision concerning an appeal will be to either gather additional or updated student data, uphold the original decision, or reverse the decision. After the committee's review of the appeal, parents and/or the individual initiating the appeal will be notified of the decision in writing by the Highly Capable Program Coordinator. If the committee recommends reassessment, parents will receive information about the date, time and location of the testing.

5. PROGRAM DESIGN

- 5.1. Each student identified as a highly capable student will be provided with educational opportunities which take into account the student's unique learning needs and capabilities. The district will offer, to the best of its staff abilities and resources, the following programs as appropriate for each student:
 - (a) Curriculum compacting
 - (b) Differentiated instruction
 - (c) Enrichment
 - (d) Content acceleration in the general education classroom
 - (e) Supplemental instruction in student's area of interest
 - (f) Specialty online course(s)
 - (g) Advanced placement courses
 - (h) Opportunity for early entrance to middle school, high school, or college
 - (i) Grade level advancement
 - (j) Online course(s) for subject acceleration
 - (k) Subject-based acceleration
 - (l) College-in-High School courses
 - (m) Academic competitions
 - (n) Summer enrichment and/or acceleration
 - (o) Before and after school services/program
- 5.2. Goals of the Highly Capable Program include:
 - (a) Serving each participant to the best of the school's ability, as creatively as possible within the limits of available resources.

- (b) Evaluating the program annually to ensure it is meeting the needs of the student population.
 - (c) Reviewing screening and selection criteria to ensure students are identified accurately and fairly.
 - (d) Improving understanding of a highly capable student's needs through professional development.
- 5.3. The school will maintain a Student Learning Plan (SLP) in *Homeroom* or SRS (or other current learning management program, as applicable) that documents a student's progress from year-to-year in the program, and record a description of the educational programs provided for students using the appropriate learning management program. Services provided to each student will be periodically reviewed to ensure that services are appropriate.
- 5.4. The Highly Capable program will respect the limits of resources provided by the state and the program options available to the district. The district will use resources from throughout the district, such as online courses and tutoring (para, teacher, peer/mentor), to assist the program in meeting a student's individual needs.

6. EXITING THE PROGRAM

- 6.1. Once a student meets district selection criteria and participates in the program, the district will provide a continuum of services.
- 6.2. Upon the request of a teacher or the Highly Capable Program Coordinator, a student no longer demonstrating a need for highly capable services may be exited from the program. The exit process may be initiated due to concerns regarding assignment completion, attendance, social/emotional wellness, academic achievement or by parent and/or student request.
- 6.3. For a student to be exited from the program, a written petition must be submitted to the Multi-Disciplinary Selection and Placement Committee for consideration. The petition should state the rationale for the request and supportive details. A parent may request to withdraw the student from the program or a student may voluntarily withdraw from the program. If a person other than the parents submits such a petition, parents will be informed of the request and given reasonable time to respond.
- 6.4. The Multi-Disciplinary Selection and Placement Committee will review the petition and make a determination about the student's continued participation based upon supportive evidence and statements. The Highly Capable Program Coordinator will inform parents in writing of the reasons for the decision and of the appeal process, as appropriate.
- 6.5. The Multi-Disciplinary Selection and Placement Committee will determine what identification procedures are necessary for students wishing to reenter the program in the future.

7. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1. Staff will determine individual professional development goals using the district's professional development program, the Marzano Framework.
- 7.2. The district will seek professional development opportunities through Educational Service District (ESD) 101, the Washington Association of Exceptionally Talented and Gifted Children (WAETAG) and Whitworth University for ongoing support of the Highly Capable Program Coordinator and the general education staff.

8. PROGRAM EVALUATION

- 8.1. The Multi-Disciplinary Selection and Placement Committee will meet once a year to:
 - (a) Determine the effectiveness of the identification process.
 - (b) Evaluate the program's ability to meet the academic needs of the highly capable students.
 - (c) Plan the program funding and expenditures.
 - (d) Review program goals.
- 8.2. Recommendations for changes to the program, if needed, will be made by the Highly Capable Program Coordinator to the district's administrative leadership team no later than May 31st each year for implementation as soon as practicable.

9. REPORTING AND RECORDKEEPING

The Highly Capable Program Coordinator is responsible for demonstrating and documenting compliance with state law and will make such records available to authorized state personnel. The coordinator will complete the annual Highly Capable Program application and end-of-year state report for the program.

Supporting Documentation

2190F1-Permission to Assess

2190F2-Student Status Notification Letter

2190F3-Parent Referral Grades K-1

2190F4-Parent Referral Grades 2-12

2190F5-Teacher Recommendation Grades K-1

2190F6-Teacher Recommendation Grades 2-12

2190F7-Identification Matrix

2190F8-Nominee Worksheet

2190F9-Data Collection Sheet

2190F10-Selection Notification and Permission to Provide Services

2190F11-Appeal Request

2190F12-Highly Capable Program Referral Public Notice

4220-Complaints Concerning Staff or Programs

Document History

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