

Advanced Learning Increasing Understanding

This grid presents information in an attempt to increase understanding of Advanced Learning programs.

The first column lists language that is commonly heard in association with Advanced Learning programs. These statements can be simplistic and/or misleading.

To increase understanding of the programs offered through Advanced Learning, the second column presents information related to each of these statements.

<i>Language that we commonly hear, BUT can be simplistic and/or misleading</i>	<i>Clarification for greater understanding</i>
“Seattle Public Schools offers Advanced Learning programs for grades 1-8.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Accelerated Progress Program (APP) is grades 1-12. • Spectrum and Advanced Learning Opportunities (ALOs) are grades 1-8.
“Seattle Public Schools serves the top 2%.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle Public Schools’ APP program serves students who score in the top 2% on nationally-normed cognitive and achievement tests (i.e., students who perform in the 98-99th percentile rank). SPS does not limit the number of students identified and eligible for the APP program; SPS offers the APP program to all students who meet eligibility criteria.
“Funding for the Highly Capable state grant is based on the number of students served.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCW 28A.185 stipulates that the funding for Highly Capable programs is based on district overall full-time student enrollment. We are currently funded at 2% of our total student population. If we serve more than 2% of our total student population, we do NOT receive increased funding. (Note: The RCW sets the funding limit, but does NOT require us to serve a number of students equal to the funding ratio -- we do not need to serve 2% of the students; we can serve fewer/more)
<p>“APP students work on standards 2 grade levels above their current grade placement.”</p> <p>“Spectrum students work on standards 1 grade level above their current grade placement.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Learning curriculum is accelerated for students because of their ability to grasp concepts and skills at an accelerated rate; students work on accelerated benchmarks as appropriate to their learning needs. • APP students are expected to demonstrate mastery of grade level benchmarks and work toward mastery of benchmarks significantly beyond grade level. • Spectrum curriculum focuses on mastery of grade level benchmarks combined with working toward mastery of above-grade level benchmarks. • For example: curriculum provided in a third grade Spectrum classroom is NOT simply the fourth grade curriculum; the curriculum will most likely consist of third and fourth benchmarks, and benchmarks beyond fourth grade combined with developmentally-appropriate instructional approaches that involve differentiation and flexible grouping.
Advanced Learning programs are “highly capable programs and serve highly capable students.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Highly capable” is the state label used to describe students who are gifted and the programs that serve these students under WAC 392-170. APP is Seattle Public Schools’ Highly Capable program.

<p>“APP” and “AP”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APP (Accelerated Progress Program) is the Seattle Public Schools’ Highly Capable program and serves students, grades 1-12, who are highly gifted. WAC 392-170 governs APP. • AP (Advanced Placement) is the College Board academic program available to all high school students. Passing of AP examinations can lead to college placement and/or credit.
<p>“Blended Spectrum” “Self-contained Spectrum” “Spectrum” “Spectrum start-up”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Spectrum programs are referred to as “Spectrum.” • All Spectrum programs share the following principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rigorous curriculum. ○ Accelerated standards ○ Classes formed by clustering all district-identified Spectrum students, and when necessary, selecting teacher-identified students to complete the classroom roster (i.e., if a building has 15 district-identified students and the class size for that grade is 28, then 13 teacher-identified students would be selected and assigned to Spectrum classroom to reach the class size of 28) (teacher-identified students are not officially coded as Spectrum and are encouraged to apply for testing for future years).
<p>“ALO is a blended Spectrum.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Learning Opportunities (ALOs) are distinct from APP and Spectrum programs. ALOs are similar to APP and Spectrum programs in that they provide a rigorous curriculum and mastery of grade-level and beyond benchmarks as appropriate based on student learning needs. ALOs differ from APP and Spectrum in service delivery. ALOs are NOT required to serve students through self-contained/cohort service delivery models. ALOs deliver instruction within heterogeneous, inclusive learning environments supported through formalized plans for differentiated instruction and flexible grouping. ALOs exist because they provide staff a systematic and formalized way for identifying and addressing the learning needs of advanced learners that many times cannot be met without the differentiation of the general education curriculum.
<p>“APP and Spectrum students have similar learning needs.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APP and Spectrum programs serve two distinct groups of learners. • APP students are students who are highly gifted (cognitive abilities in the 98+ percentile range). APP students are able to work at a <i>significantly</i> accelerated learning pace, and at standards (benchmarks) that are <i>significantly</i> above their grade level, and at a <i>significantly</i> advanced level of complexity and depth. • Spectrum students are students who are mild/moderately gifted (cognitive abilities in the 90+ percentile range). Spectrum students learn at an <i>accelerated</i> pace in comparison to general education peers, work with grade level and above standards (benchmarks), and able to work with complex ideas and concepts.