

Superintendent Procedure 2190SP Highly Capable Services & Advanced Learning Programs

Approved by: s/Larry Nyland Date: 8/24/16

Dr. Larry Nyland, Superintendent



Highly Capable Services and Advanced Learning Programs

School Board Policy No. 2190, Highly Capable Services & Advanced Learning Programs, outlines a framework of objectives for Seattle Public Schools' (SPS) Highly Capable Services and Advanced Learning Programs that meet the instructional needs of students identified by the district as "Highly Capable" and "Advanced Learners." The following procedures shall be employed to refer, evaluate, and select students to participate in the program.

Definitions

Per state mandate, Highly Capable Services are designed for students identified as Highly Capable to provide one or more of the following: enhanced curricula, appropriately differentiated instruction, deeper learning opportunities, and/ or accelerated pacing. To further the development of their potential, it is equally as important to recognize the unique needs of these students and to support their social and emotional needs as long as they stay in SPS, from identification through graduation.

The District also supports Advanced Learning Programs (Spectrum/ Advanced Learning Opportunities) in grades 1-8 for students identified as Advanced Learners to provide advanced curriculum in reading/ELA and mathematics. Spectrum/ Advanced Learning Opportunities are open to students who have been identified as Advanced Learners, as well as to students identified as Highly Capable.

Referral

Anyone may refer a child for the eligibility evaluation process for Highly Capable Services and Advanced Learning Programs, including teachers, other staff, parents, students, and community members. However, a student's parent or guardian must submit signed permission for the student to participate in the eligibility evaluation process. All candidates must go through the eligibility evaluation process and follow the established timelines and eligibility criteria in order to provide equal access for the thousands of candidates who are referred annually.

A Fall/Regular Assessment Cycle is SPS's standard process to determine Advanced Learning eligibility. For students to be considered, their referral forms must be submitted by the deadline. These forms are published annually by SPS in multiple languages, places and media (e.g., website, calendar, and local print media).

Summer testing is available only for students who move to or return to Seattle after the Fall/Regular Assessment Cycle referral deadline. It is NOT available for students who wish to retest, private school students who lived in the city at the time of the deadline, or students in the system who missed the Fall deadline. These students must follow the Fall/Regular Assessment Cycle dates for placement consideration the next school year.

The referral form consists of a Parent/Guardian Permission Form and Rating Scale, which is published and described on the SPS website (hard copies are available at the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence and upon request at all SPS elementary, middle, and K-8 school sites). Teachers and community members wishing to refer a student for evaluation must have the student's parent or guardian complete the Parent/Guardian Permission Form and Rating Scale and submit by the established deadline.

Students currently enrolled in high school grades 9-11 can also be referred for Highly Capable services for the upcoming school year through a similar (not identical) set of procedures. The high school application packet will include the following: the Parent/Guardian Permission Form and Rating Scale; Teacher/Educator Rating Scale; current achievement; Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), American College Test (ACT) scores (if taken); current overall GPA; current coursework; a writing sample (writing prompt is provided with application packet); and grade reports from IB and/or AP courses. The Multidisciplinary Selection Committee will evaluate the application packet to determine eligibility.

Evaluation

Referred students are evaluated based on tests that measure cognitive ability, academic achievement in ELA and mathematics, and the Teacher/Educator Rating Scale. Parent/guardian rating scales and permission forms are also required. Cognitive abilities testing (CogAT) for both SPS and private school students is scheduled by the Advanced Learning office. Achievement testing is provided for all SPS students in grades K-8 through District testing at their individual schools.

All referred students' test results are recorded by the Advanced Learning Office and are made available to the referred student's parent/ guardian.

NOTE: If a student demonstrates cognitive ability in verbal, quantitative, or non-verbal reasoning AND qualifies for free or reduced lunch, English Language Learner services, and/ or Special Education services, the student may warrant further consideration by the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MSC) if there is strong teacher/ educator input to do so. [Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Section 392-170-060 focused on evidence of cognitive ability and/or academic achievement.]

Identification

The MSC reviews each candidate's test scores and supporting documentation to determine eligibility. SPS's established eligibility thresholds are not absolute disqualifiers; teacher and parent/guardian input are also important considerations. In order to provide equitable opportunities for all students and to uphold the intent of

WAC language regarding protected classes [WAC 392-170-035], the MSC will give special consideration to and assess the impact of the following factors: cultural diversity, socio-economic status, linguistic background, and identified disability.

Highly Capable

Referred students in Grades K-8 may be tested during the Fall/Regular Assessment Cycle window for identification as Highly Capable. Identification in Grades K-8 as Highly Capable requires:

- 98th-plus percentile rankings in two or more subtests of CogAT, at least one of which must be the Verbal-Quantitative (VQ), Quantitative-Nonverbal (QN) or Verbal-Quantitative-Nonverbal (VQN) composite score
- 95th-plus percentile rankings in reading/ELA and math on district-administered achievement tests

All Advanced Learning Programs are open to Highly Capable students. The Highly Capable self-contained cohort model ends upon completion of grade 8.

Advanced Learner

Referred students in Grades K-7 will be tested during the fall evaluation eligibility cycle for identification as Advanced Learners. Identification in Grades K-7 as an Advanced Learner requires:

- 87th-plus percentile rankings in two or more subtests of CogAT, at least one of which must be the VQ, QN or VQN composite score
- 87th-plus percentile rankings in reading/ELA and math on district-administered achievement tests

Applicants in grades 5-7 who meet the advanced learning cognitive requirements and receive 87th-plus percentile rankings in reading achievement only will also be considered eligible for Advanced Learner/Spectrum Language Arts. Advanced Learner/Spectrum eligibility does not determine mathematics placement for students in grades 6-8.

Students transferring in from another District's Highly Capable program has been, and will continue to be, handled on a case by case basis.

Eligibility decisions and test scores are reported to the parent/ guardian who initiated the referral through the Source and/or by letter.

Continuing Eligibility

Based on Washington State law (WAC 392-170-078), students who are identified as Highly Capable will receive a "continuum of services" from the time that "services are started" through grade 12. Eligibility continues for students identified as Advanced Learners or as Highly Capable from the time of identification, as long as the student remains in SPS.

- When the MSC determines that a student who is not currently enrolled in SPS is eligible for Advanced Learning services, they have one year to enroll to begin services in Seattle Public Schools without the need for retesting.
- If a student is enrolled and leaves SPS for any reason, they will retain their Advanced Learning eligibility for up to one year (i.e. moving to another District, state, a private school, or a parent on sabbatical leave).
- Advanced Learners may test for Highly Capable eligibility without risk of losing their current eligibility.

Appeals

Parents/Guardians of students who participate in the eligibility evaluation process may appeal the decision of the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MSC). Appeals must be received in the Advanced Learning Office within three weeks from the date postmarked on the eligibility decision notification so that decisions can be made for enrollment purposes. Appeals should contain a signed letter of explanation for the appeal as well as compelling information demonstrating that the test scores in the student's eligibility decision notification are not representative of the child's abilities. Additional current cognitive and/ or achievement test results may be submitted in the appeal. This information will be reviewed as an added data point in conjunction with the scores reported on the eligibility notification. Specific information on how to appeal is included in eligibility letters and is also available on the SPS website.

For families who choose to appeal and who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program, SPS will provide in-house testing during the appeals process free of charge. Appeals decisions are final; there are no appeals of appeals.

Enrollment in Programs

The Student Assignment Plan and Superintendent Procedure 3130SP, Student Assignment, governs all Highly Capable and Advanced Learner program enrollment options.

Students in grades K-7 designated as Highly Capable will not automatically be enrolled in the Highly Capable Cohort. Even if the HC Cohort is offered at the student's attendance area school, families must actively select the HC Cohort and school for which the student is eligible and submit a School Choice Form during the SPS Open Enrollment period.

Students enrolled in the HC Cohort in grade 8 will automatically be enrolled in 9th grade at their pathway high school. If a student chooses not to attend the pathway high school at any time, enrollment in the pathway high school is no longer guaranteed.

Students in grades K-4 designated as Advanced Learner will not automatically be enrolled in Spectrum. Even if Spectrum is offered at the student's attendance area school, families must actively select Spectrum and the school for which the student is eligible and submit a School Choice Form during the SPS Open Enrollment period. Assignment to Spectrum is based on space availability. For Advanced Learning Opportunities (ALO) at elementary schools, a student's identification as Highly Capable or Advanced Learner is used for placement. No School Choice Form is necessary.

Students in grades 5-7 designated as Advanced Learner WILL automatically be enrolled in Spectrum at the student's attendance area middle school. No School Choice form is necessary unless the student is requesting placement at a school outside of their attendance area.

For students who participate in the summer testing opportunity, the Advanced Learning Office will notify the parents/ guardians of their students' results at the end of August to use for enrollment purposes.

Program Design

Highly Capable services are available to all students who are identified as Highly Capable in grades K-12. The curriculum is presented at an accelerated learning pace and/ or advanced level of complexity and depth, requiring students to perform significantly above grade level. Students identified as HC in kindergarten begin receiving HC services in the second semester in the school in which they are currently enrolled, and may choose to join the self-contained Highly Capable Cohort (HCC) at designated pathway schools beginning in the first grade. Students identified as HC in grades K-7 may choose to join the HC Cohort at any grade, one through eight.

The district currently offers Highly Capable students the following services and programs:

Highly Capable Cohort (HCC) service model is self-contained in Grades 1-5 in ELA, math, science, and social studies. A formal waiver to allow flexible grouping of Gen Ed., AL and HC students for social studies may be requested by HC Cohort elementary schools. For purposes surrounding program implementation fidelity, the waiver process must outline procedures supporting an annual review process. This review of program effectiveness will be anchored in evaluation components that incorporate the analysis of baseline, progress and summative data, progress monitoring practices and a formal review of performance results aligned to initial, specified outcomes conducted at the building level. The waiver process must include principal, staff, community, and district representative input. The HC Cohort service model is also self-contained in most core subjects in Grades 6-8. For 9th grade students who are enrolled in the 8th grade HC Cohort will be assigned to attend an accelerated AP pathway at Garfield or they may submit a School Choice form to attend an accelerated IB pathway at Ingraham. Placement at Ingraham is subject to space availability.

Advanced Learning Opportunities (ALOs) and **Spectrum** are for students identified as "Advanced Learners," as well as those identified as Highly Capable. ALO and Spectrum are for students who perform well above average for their grade level and require differentiated instructional practices to provide appropriate challenge. These students are typically served within General Education classrooms through flexible grouping, acceleration, and/ or interventions through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model.

Spectrum is offered at all middle schools and at several specified elementary schools.

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program are available at all SPS comprehensive high schools. All comprehensive high schools offer either AP or IB courses in multiple subject areas that allow Highly Capable students to accelerate and/ or deepen their learning. The courses provide challenging academic material at the college-level for all students who have taken the prerequisite courses.

Other Services

Other services for Highly Capable students are available from identification to graduation. These may include social and emotional counseling and/ or support for twice-exceptional students' other learning needs.

In the field of gifted education, students who are both gifted and disabled are considered twice-exceptional learners. Seattle Public Schools' Advanced Learning Office recognizes the importance of identifying and serving these students both with specialized educational services and through 504 accommodations. Working in close collaboration with school and Special Education personnel, district staff supports these students in a number of important ways. Advanced Learning staff provides accommodations for students during eligibility assessments, observes students in classes to determine the best accommodations and specially designed instruction (including individual classes in a student's areas of strength), and participates in Student Intervention Team and Individual Education Plan meetings as needed to ensure students' needs for gifted services are recognized. Advanced Learning staff also collaborates with experts in the Special Education Department and from the community to provide ongoing professional development for teachers in advanced learning programs.

The Advanced Learning Office provides resources to District schools to support identified Highly Capable and Advanced Learners. These services include assistance in curriculum alignment and ongoing professional development opportunities for school staff working with Highly Capable and Advanced Learners.

Exiting Programs

Students may be exited from Highly Capable Services if the services are no longer appropriate. A meeting of the parent/guardian, teacher, administrator, a representative from the Advanced Learning Office, and the student (at parent/ guardian discretion) shall precede such a service delivery change.

Community and Family Engagement

Individual progress for Highly Capable students is reviewed annually as part of parent/teacher conferences at elementary and middle schools. High school students create and review their four-year High School and Beyond Plan with a school counselor.

The Advanced Learning office works closely with the Highly Capable Services Advisory Committee (HCSAC) to share information and receive feedback from parents/guardians, students and teachers about the Highly Capable-program. The HCSAC holds monthly meetings and is composed of parents/guardians, teachers, principals and Advanced Learning staff members.

Reporting

The Superintendent or designee shall provide an end-of-the-year report to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Approved: January 2015

Revised: August 2016

Cross Reference: Policy No. 2190; RCW 28A.185.030 Programs — Authority of local school districts — Selection of students; WAC 392-170 Special service program — Highly Capable students