



## **INSTRUCTION**

### **Highly Capable Programs**

The Everett Public Schools Highly Capable (HC) Program develops the special abilities of HC students by fostering academic excellence through a range of instructional practices based on student needs. This process begins with rigorous and relevant core academic instruction at the student's grade level. It may also include differentiation, enrichment, challenge activities, grouping with academic peers, or accelerated, compacted, integrated, and enriched curriculum.

### **Definition ([WAC 392-170-035](#))**

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. Highly capable students exhibit outstanding abilities within their general intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, and/or creative productivities within a specific domain. These students are present both in the general populace and within all protected classes ([Chapter 28A.640 RCW](#) and [Chapter 28A.642 RCW](#)).

### **Learning Characteristics**

Students who are highly capable may possess, but are not limited to, these learning characteristics ([WAC 392-170-036](#)):

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.

### **Highly Capable Program Service Goals**

The Everett Public Schools HC program service goals are:

- To provide enriched and accelerated academic opportunities with an emphasis on the development of higher-level thinking skills that include depth of knowledge in application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of content and concepts;
- To offer a rigorous academic curriculum based on the state-adopted Common Core State Standards to appropriately challenge and motivate students to excel;
- To offer an environment where HC students are encouraged to reach their full potential; and
- To address the social and emotional needs of HC students through teacher support and peer interaction.

## **Program Services ([WAC 392-170-078](#))**

HC services are designed for those students identified with exceptional cognitive and academic abilities along with superior academic performance. A continuum of services provides a challenging, integrated, and enriched experience. These program services include the following:

- The Learning Enrichment Achievement Program (LEAP) for students in first through fifth grade is provided in the student's home school and general education setting;
- The HC self-contained program is provided for students in second through fifth grade;
- Advanced course offerings are provided for middle school students; and
- Advanced course offerings are provided for high school students and may include Advanced Placement courses, College in the High School, and Running Start.

Each student identified as a highly capable student shall be provided educational opportunities which take into account such student's unique needs and capabilities ([WAC 392-170-080](#)).

## **Annual Notification ([WAC 392-170-042](#))**

Annual public notification of parents/guardians and students regarding HC services will be made via school and district publications, such as school newsletters, the district website, parent/guardian letters sent home with students at all school locations, Highly Capable Parent Information nights, parent/guardian meetings, and transition conferences.

## **Referral ([WAC 392-170-045](#))**

The district will conduct universal screenings **at two (2) elementary grade levels** to find students who may qualify for potential highly capable program placement. Referrals must be available for all grade levels not being universally screened, and may be submitted by teachers, other staff, parents/guardians, students, and members of the community.

## **Parent/Guardian Permission ([WAC 392-170-047](#))**

Parent/guardian permission shall be obtained in writing before:

1. Conducting **additional** assessment(s) to determine eligibility for participation in programs for highly capable students; and
2. Placement in the district's highly capable program and/or before any special services and programs are started for an identified highly capable student.
3. Parent/Guardian permission notice shall include:
  - 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. Information about the district's program and the options that will be available to identified students; and
  - d. An explanation of the procedure to exit a student from the program.

## **Universal Screening**

Each year the district will provide universal screening procedures for each student in first and fifth grade using the Cognitive Abilities (CogAT) screener. Screening will take place during the fall screening period. Universal screening must occur once in or before second grade, and again in or before **leaving fifth sixth** grade. The purpose of universal screening is to include students who traditionally are not referred for highly capable programs and services. Students discovered during universal screening may need further assessment to determine whether the student is eligible for placement in a program for highly capable students. The district will consider at least two (2) student data points during universal screening, which may include previously administered **objective** standardized, classroom-based performance, cognitive, or achievement assessments, or research-based behavior ratings scales.

One of the district's strategic targets is to ensure that each student has equitable access to rigorous curriculum content. When more students have a chance to participate in universal screening, it is likely that more students will ultimately end up in future HC classes. Regardless of how the student performs on the HC screener, the student can still take part in testing administration for the HC self-contained program.

## **Program Assessment ([WAC 392-170-055](#))**

Universal screening of first and fifth grade students for LEAP will be administered by classroom teachers in the fall at all elementary schools.

Testing for the self-contained HC program will take place at each elementary school on a predetermined schedule in February or March. Parents/guardians must complete an application no later than December 15 to have their student tested. Parents/guardians will receive a letter in January with testing details, including date, time, and location.

The CogAT and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) will be administered to students in first through fourth grade who are referred for testing for the self-contained HC Program. Students participating in the test administration will receive scores for subtests including verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative areas, as well as an overall composite score averaging the three (3) subtest scores on the CogAT. They will also receive scores in reading and mathematics provided by the ITBS.

It is important that parents/guardians do not send their student for testing if the student is ill when testing is scheduled. Parents/guardians should notify the P-5 Instruction and Early Learning office no later than 24 hours after the scheduled test if their child was ill and unable to attend the session. If notification is received within the 24-hour period, the student will be added to the next test session. If notification is not received within the 24-hour period, appeals to reschedule testing for the HC program due to illness will not be considered.

Any screenings or additional assessments will be conducted within the school day and at the school the student attends. On a case-by-case basis and with the consent of the parent or guardian, the district may offer student screenings or additional assessment opportunities during the summer, outside of school hours, or at an alternative site.

## **Selection**

### **LEAP Selection Committee**

A multi-disciplinary selection committee ([WAC 392-170-070](#)) composed of the following district staff is responsible for selection decisions:

- The program administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's program for HC students;
- A school psychologist with training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results;
- Teachers with knowledge and experience in teaching HC students;
- An HC program teacher;
- The director of assessment and research; and
- An elementary school principal.

### **Highly Capable Selection Committee**

A multi-disciplinary selection committee composed of the following district staff is responsible for selection decisions:

- The program administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's program for HC students;
- A school psychologist with training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results;
- The director of assessment and research with training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results;
- Classroom teachers with training and experience in teaching HC students;
- Principals of schools with HC centers; and
- Additional professionals selected by the district to review data collected for each referred student.

The committee reviews assessment data to determine whether a student performs or shows potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels when compared with others of their age, experiences, or environments. Multiple objective criteria are used to identify students who are **determined to need services among the most highly capable** ([WAC 392-170-075](#)). No single criterion will disqualify a student from identification.

### **LEAP Program**

Students identified to receive LEAP HC services will be served in their home school and general education setting.

Students who are identified for LEAP services in the general education setting are not automatically guaranteed placement in the HC self-contained program.

## **Highly Capable Self-Contained Program**

Placement in the HC self-contained program will be based on assessment information obtained during annual HC testing administration in February or March of each year. Students identified to be served in the HC self-contained program will be identified by the committee as **requiring accelerated learning and enhanced instruction.** ~~the “most highly capable students.”~~

Multiple objective assessment criteria will be used to determine each student’s eligibility for HC services, and no single criterion may disqualify a student from identification.

Additional assessments that may be used to determine placement decisions include:

- iReady data
- SBA assessment data
- Teacher observation inventory
- Parent/guardian nomination inventory

## **Selection Notification**

### **LEAP Program**

Notification will be provided to parents/guardians and the resident school of the student’s LEAP identification status with service to begin in February of the current school year.

## **Highly Capable Self-Contained Program**

A letter will be mailed to parents/guardians in early April with their student’s test results and the committee’s decision regarding HC self-contained program enrollment for the following school year. Parents/guardians will be asked to provide a signed consent form for their student for placement in the LEAP or HC self-contained program. The expectation is that students will have regular and consistent attendance if placement in an HC program is accepted.

## **Appeal Process ([WAC 392-170-076](#))**

Parents/guardians who do not agree with the multidisciplinary selection committee’s decision and wish to appeal may do so by completing a Selection Decision Appeal form. The completed form should be provided to:

Highly Capable Committee  
Everett Public Schools  
3900 Broadway, Everett, WA 98201

Appeals and requests for reconsideration of placement will be reviewed and considered by the HC committee. Parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the committee's decision. The decision of the HC committee is final.

The appeal will be based upon one of the following criteria:

1. A condition or circumstance believed to have caused a misinterpretation of the testing results, (i.e., an incorrect birthdate or grade level used in calculation of the student's score).
2. An inequitable application of the identification procedures (i.e., the applicant's proficiency with the English language).
3. An extraordinary and temporary circumstance that negatively affected the validity of the test results (i.e., a traumatic event or physical distress immediately preceding the test).

Appeals submitted for reasons other than those listed above will be denied without further consideration. No outside testing will be considered. The decision of the appeal review team is final.

The deadline for submission of an appeal is ten (10) workdays from the date of notification of score results.

## **Exit Procedures**

The HC program consists of a variety of models and services and therefore is dynamic and fluid. Students will be exited from the program for one of the following reasons:

1. Parents/guardians request that the student no longer take part in the services. In this case the parent/guardian completes the exit request form and provides the completed form to the P-5 Instruction and Early Learning office located at 3900 Broadway, Everett, WA 98201. The form will then be placed in the student's file.
2. Once a student is placed in HC services, that student will remain in HC services unless it is evident that the student is consistently having difficulty. School staff members and parents/guardians will meet to discuss student progress and support. Placement in HC services will be reviewed to determine if it is in the best interest of the student. The decision to exit a student from the program will be based on data demonstrating that the student is consistently struggling to meet HC standards.

## **Highly Capable Program Services**

### **LEAP Services**

Students identified to receive LEAP HC services will be served at their home school in the general education setting. Services will include a variety of strategies that may include differentiation, challenge, and enrichment activities, grouping with peers of similar ability, project-based learning or activities that extend learning. Services will be based on student needs and achievement in one (1) or more subject areas, such as reading and/or math. The program seeks to stimulate curiosity, problem-solving and develop higher-level thought processes at the academic level for which the student is performing.

## **Highly Capable Self-Contained Program**

Elementary HC program services are provided through a self-contained program in second through fifth grade. Students will attend five days a week in a full-day self-contained classroom. Parents/guardians and students accepting placement will be provided transportation on a daily basis to and from the program.

Students identified as HC require comprehensive and substantial modification to the general education curriculum that challenges them to apply complex thinking skills when working with core skills and concepts. The curriculum is presented at an accelerated learning pace and focuses on grade-level expectations that are above the student's assigned grade level with an advanced level of complexity and depth. These students can master learning objectives more quickly, allowing for in-depth extensions of the curriculum and creative expression. Self-contained HC classrooms are differentiated from a traditional classroom by intellectual rigor, accelerated pace, self-paced learning, greater depth and breadth of content, and structured inquiry.

## **Advanced Courses at the Middle School Level**

Advanced courses involve faster pacing, increasingly rigorous content, and increased homework and study expectations. Students need to be willing to invest extra time outside of school to keep up with the increased pace of this course.

Math Advanced Courses are designed to include the standards and materials from sixth through eighth grade, Algebra, and Geometry. This sequence of math courses can appeal to those students who have already shown a strong aptitude in mathematics, as well as those students who have an interest and enthusiasm for math and/or math-related subjects.

English Advanced Courses will allow students to advance their learning of the standards with instructional materials that are a grade above their current grade, including more complex, challenging reading texts. Students who have already shown a strong aptitude in reading and writing, as well as those students who have an interest and enthusiasm for the study of English, will be interested in these courses.

Enrollment in advanced courses requires parents/guardians to submit a signed registration form which signifies an understanding of the nature and requirements of the advanced courses.

## **Advanced Course Offerings at the High School Level**

High school course offerings vary from school to school. Courses may include Advanced Placement, College in the High School, and Running Start. Examples of advanced courses include but are not limited to, English/language arts, mathematics, science, and world languages.

Cross reference: [Board Policy 2215](#) Highly Capable Programs

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