

Ellensburg Public Schools  
Highly Capable Program

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

Ellensburg Public Schools is committed to providing challenging academic programs for all students. The purpose of the Highly Capable program is to meet the unique needs of students who demonstrate exceptional ability, academic achievement and creativity. To meet these needs, eligible students in grades K-12 receive specialized instruction in developmentally appropriate models varying by age group:

- The Highly Capable Program is called Discovery in grades K-2. The service model includes specialized grouping and differentiated instruction. Service is provided at each elementary school for students enrolled in that school. Entering Kindergarten students will be identified annually in the Fall. Students not previously identified who are moving to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades will be nominated and screened in the Spring of each year, and will be identified in the Fall of each year. Discovery eligibility, once established in Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> or second grade will continue through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- At the grade 3-5 level, the program is called Challenge. Once identified as eligible in the Spring of of grade 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, eligibility continues through grade 12. Challenge students participate in a one full day per week, by grade. The program is delivered by a specially trained teacher. Challenge students also benefit from specialized grouping and or differentiated instruction in their home school.
- At the 6-8 level, the program is called Quest. Quest students attend a one period per day class comprised of eligible students only. Such specialized instruction may be the study of a variety of topics in an exploratory format, or may be accelerated instruction in Language Arts.
- At the 9-12 level, eligible students are served in three ways:
  - 1.) Specialized advisement groups in College and Career Readiness, that meet at specified times least 10 times during the year. Service will be initiated in 9<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2014-2015 school year, with one grade per year added until all grades are served.
  - 2.) College in the High School programs, including Advanced Placement, Cornerstone and Running Start.
  - 3.) Honors classes. Participation is based on student choice, scholarship and teacher nomination.Highly Capable Program eligibility is required to participate in component 1 at the high school level. Eligibility established through earlier identification is brought forward, or initial eligibility may be established through following the nomination and assessment process.

**PHILOSOPHY:**

Highly Capable students need a program with differentiated instruction, peer association opportunities and challenging academic demands so that they may develop their potential.

#### GOALS:

1. To provide a challenging learning environment that encourages development of individual potential, enhances self-concept, and promotes self-direction and self-evaluation.
2. To provide opportunities for highly capable students to learn and use creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, research and communication skills.
3. To encourage Highly Capable students to improve and extend basic skills and to accelerate their skills in areas of particular competency.
4. To increase the knowledge of the educational community and general public about Highly Capable individuals and the strategies which help Highly Capable people reach their full potential.

#### OBJECTIVES:

Students served in the program will:

1. Understand and accept their own giftedness and cultivate, understand and respect the differences of others.
2. Realize contributions that they can make to society, finding pleasure and satisfaction in sharing their gifts with others.
3. Accept responsibility more consistently for their learning through investigation of more and different content areas at advanced levels.
4. Develop advanced skills in utilizing the creative and critical thinking processes.

#### NOMINATION:

Nominations can come from many sources. Parents, teachers, students, other staff and community members may nominate students who they believe demonstrate, or show potential of demonstrating exceptional ability. Nomination forms can be obtained from any building secretary, or by calling the Highly Capable Program Secretary at the district Special Services Office, 925-8117. All nominations must be received by the close of the nomination period. Students who meet or exceed screening criteria will be tested following receipt of parent consent.

#### SCREENING:

Nominated students meeting pre-determined screening values will be assessed to determine eligibility.

Screening criteria by grade used in Spring 2014 follows:

K: IRL level E or teacher recommendation

1<sup>st</sup> IRL Level K, or teacher recommendation

2<sup>nd</sup> IRE level O

3<sup>rd</sup> SRI Advanced

4<sup>th</sup> SRI Advanced

5<sup>th</sup> SRI Advanced\

6<sup>th</sup> Smarter Balance score (TBD) in Reading or Math

7<sup>th</sup> Smarter Balance score (TBD) in Reading or Math

8<sup>th</sup> Smarter Balance score (TBD) in Reading or Math

9<sup>th</sup>  
10<sup>th</sup>  
11<sup>th</sup> Smarter Balance score (TBD) in Reading or Math

#### SELECTION:

- Nominated students currently enrolled in an Ellensburg School offering services of the Highly Capable program will be screened in the spring of each year. Students in grades 2 through 11 who attain scores at or above screening criteria will be assessed to determine eligibility for placement for the following school year. Students in grades K and 1 will be nominated and screened in the Spring of the year, with assessment to follow in the Fall. The exception to Spring screening and assessment will be students entering Kindergarten, who will be screened and assessed in the Fall of each year.
- All students meeting eligibility requirements will be served. No wait lists or capacity limitations will be imposed.
- Transferring students with documented eligibility from their previous school will be assessed upon arrival and must meet the eligibility requirements of Ellensburg Public Schools to be placed. Students who have met Ellensburg eligibility criteria through assessments provided in another district will be placed.
- Eligibility is established annually for service in grades K, 1 and 2. Students establishing eligibility in grades K, 1 or 2 will continue to be eligible through grade 2. Once a student has met eligibility criteria established by Ellensburg Public Schools for participation in a grade 3 or above program, the student will not need to meet criteria a second time.
- Selection of program participants will be made by the multidisciplinary selection committee consisting of the following professionals:
  - 1) Two classroom teachers with training and experience in teaching Highly Capable students.
  - 2) A psychologist or other qualified practitioner with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results.
  - 3) A district administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's program for Highly Capable students.
- Exit:
  - \*Parents may discontinue service at any time by contacting the child's teacher or the program coordinator.
  - \*Students whose enrollment was discontinued after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade eligibility was established, may re-enroll in the highly capable program at parent request, and without qualifying a second time
  - \*Teachers may recommend discontinuation of service if the student is not making consistent academic progress or is interfering with the educational rights of others.
  - \*Prior to a teacher initiated exit, a conference will be held with the parent, teacher and program coordinator.

## ELIGIBILITY:

To establish eligibility, applicants must meet the criteria listed below:

All Kindergarten students will be screened in the Fall of each year using the CoGAT screening instrument. Students matriculating to grades 1 and 2 who were nominated while in grade K or 1 will be screened in the Spring and assessed in the Fall of each year. Students in all other grades will be screened using grade appropriate instruments named in SCREENING above and administered in the Spring of each year.

Eligibility Criteria for placement in grades K, 1, and 2:

1. A 95<sup>th</sup> percentile score on the ITBS in either reading or math.
2. A 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile score on the Cognitive Abilities Test (CoGat)\*\*
3. A parent inventory and teacher rating showing that the child demonstrates unusual creativity.

For placement in grades 3-12:

1. A 95<sup>th</sup> percentile score on the ITBS\* in either reading or math.
2. A 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile score on the Cognitive Abilities Test CoGat.
3. A parent inventory and teacher rating showing that the child demonstrates unusual creativity.

\*ITBS or other comparable measure of achievement may be substituted at the discretion of the selection committee.

\*\* Other comparable assessment of mental abilities may be substituted at the discretion of the selection committee.

- Privately administered assessments will not substitute for district administered assessments.
- Selection will be based on scores in the areas named above. Applicants who do not have a score in one or more areas will be assessed in any area lacking at district expense.
- Students demonstrating bilinguality will be given appropriate consideration of this ability at both the screening and assessment stages of identification.
- The Highly Capable Program will assure nondiscrimination in the review of testing results. Test results used in the assessment of any nominated student shall be reviewed by a psychologist or other qualified practitioner with training to interpret cognitive and achievement tests. Where specific test results obtained in any assessment do not appear to the qualified district personnel to accurately reflect a student's cognitive ability or specific academic achievement, due to such reasons as test measurement error or environmental, cultural or economic factors, the qualified district personnel shall apply professional judgment to a determination of cognitive ability to specific academic achievement. In such event, the qualified district personnel shall document in a written narrative the basis for such determination, the instruments used, if any, and the data collected for a determination of cognitive ability or specific academic achievement.

**TIMELINE:**

**Public Notice:** Last week of March

*Provided annually, directly to teachers at faculty meetings for grade levels represented, school newsletters to parents in the spring of each year, and continuously posted on the district web site.*

**Nominations:** 1<sup>st</sup> week of September – 1st week of April

*Parents, teachers, staff, students and community members may nominate students for participation. Nominators will be asked to complete a nomination form and return it to the highly capable program office by the end of the first week in April. Nominated students will be screened. If the student attains the screening score established at each grade level, and parents agree the child should be assessed, they will be asked to complete an application, permission for assessment, parent rating form and submit these items to the highly capable program office by April 30.*

*Students entering K may be nominated by the end of October of each year. Processing these nominations will proceed in a manner similar to those received for older students with eligibility determined by the end of November of each year.*

**Teacher Rating:** 2<sup>nd</sup> week of April

*Classroom teachers will complete a teacher rating form and return it to the Highly Capable program office.*

**Parent Inventory:** 2<sup>nd</sup> week of April

*Parents will complete a student rating form and return it to the highly capable program office.*

**Assessment:** 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May

*Nominated students will be assessed to determine levels of academic achievement, ability and creativity.*

**Selection:** Last week of May

*The multidisciplinary selection committee will review assessment results to determine program placement.*

**Notification:** 1<sup>st</sup> week of June

*Parents will be notified of results and of the appeal process.*

**Schedules of Service:** Last week of August

*Parents will receive student schedules.*

**RECORDS:** All records related to notice, nomination, assessment, eligibility and consent will be housed in the district Special Services office.

PUBLIC NOTICE: A complete program description will be posted on the district web site. In addition, notice of the nomination process will be given at least annually, provided in school news letters, and provided at building faculty meetings in elementary and middle schools.

DOCUMENTATION:

- Nomination form
- Screening values
- Program application/consent for testing
- Parent inventory
- Teacher Rating
- Achievement Test scores
- Ability Scores
- Creativity Measures
- Parent consent for placement

APPEALS:

- Any appeals of an eligibility decision of the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee will include a completed appeals form and any new data that may support the appeal. Appeals should be addressed to the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee, c/o Special Services Director, 1300 East Third Avenue, Ellensburg WA 98926.

Updated 5/26/14

Revised 9/10/14