



Highly Capable Program Parent Handbook



Powerful Instruction • Equitable Access • High Expectations

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Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Monroe School District Highly Capable Program is to identify and serve highly capable K12 students by providing a consistent, challenging and supportive educational environment within the resources of the district. We provide instruction, activities, and services that accelerate learning, and offer a unique academic challenge for young learners identified as highly capable.

Program Goals

The goals of the program are to provide students with daily opportunities to:

- Maximize their rate of learning and levels of achievement through researchbased differentiation;
- Expand their intellectual ability in an environment that places an emphasis on critical thinking and problemsolving skills;
- Develop intellectual curiosity, self-directed learning and communication skills through independent research investigation;
- Develop creative productivity through the purposeful design of products intended to have an impact on one or more target audiences;
- Develop and maintain a positive attitude toward school and learning, as well as toward self and others.

Learner Outcomes

Highly capable students will:

- Demonstrate growth commensurate with their aptitude during the school year;
- Demonstrate use of higher level thinking and problem solving skills;
- Use an inquiry process to conduct independent research investigations;
- Use appropriate written, spoken, and media tools to construct and convey new learning acquired through inquiry;
- Learn and use techniques that help in the search for innovative solutions;
- Recognize their strengths, needs, and individuality. They will develop skills to achieve their potential while making meaningful contributions to their classroom, school and larger community.

Who are the Highly Capable and How Do They Learn?

Washington State defines highly capable students as those “who perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels compared with others of their age, experiences or environments. Outstanding abilities are seen within students’ general intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, and/or creative productivities within a specific domain. These students are present not only in the general education populace, but are present in all protected classes. . . ” [Washington Administrative Code Chapter 392.170.35](#)

Learning Characteristics

- Capacity to learn with unusual depth of understanding, to retain what has been learned, and to transfer learning to new situations.
- Capacity and willingness to deal with increasing levels of abstractions and complexity earlier than their age peers.
- Creative ability to make unusual connections among ideas and concepts.
- Ability to learn quickly in their area(s) of intellectual strength.
- Capacity for intense concentration and/or focus.
- A complete list is shown at the end of this packet.

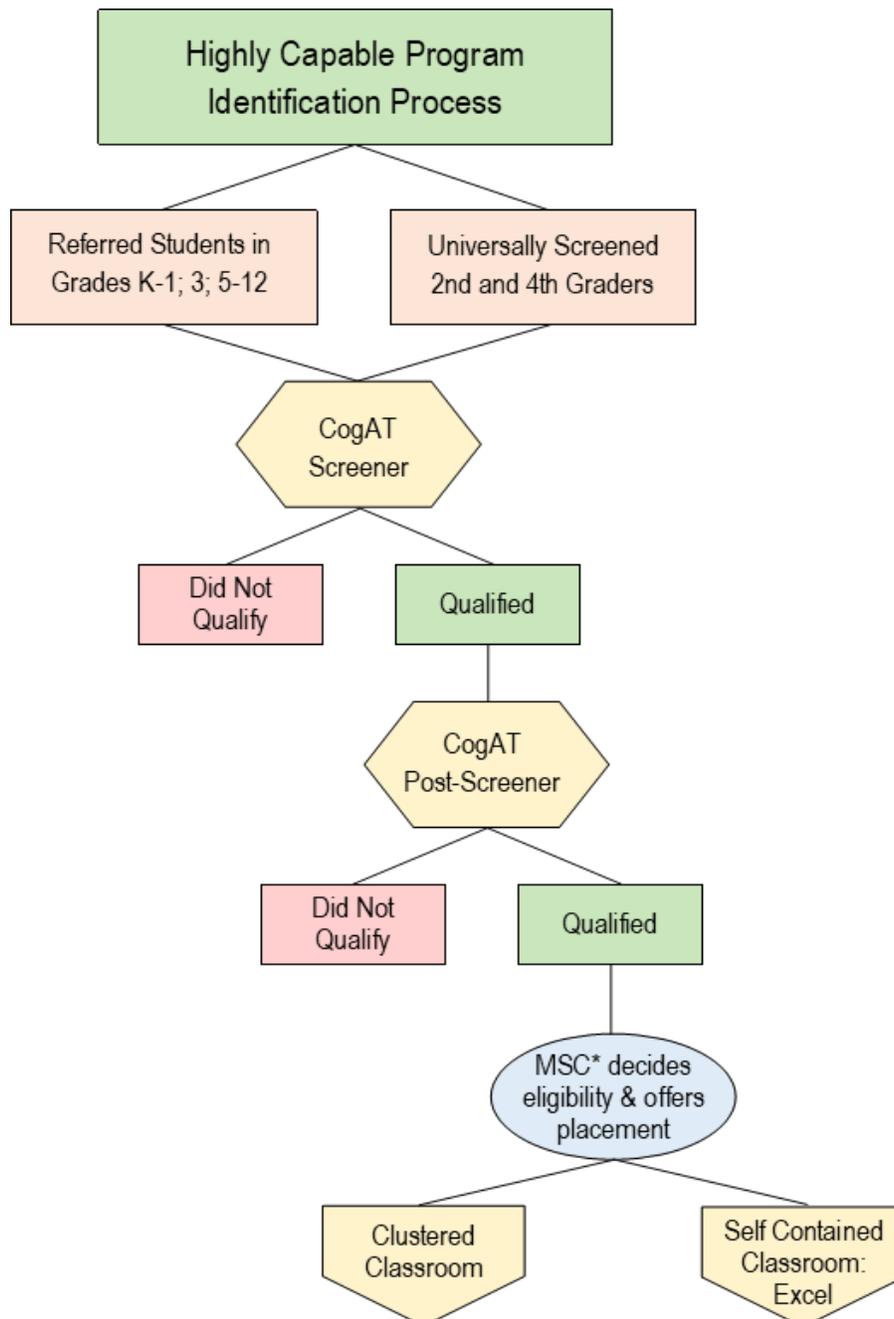
Reference: [Washington Administrative Code Chapter 392.170.036](#)

Who is Considered for Highly-Capable Services?

Any student can be considered and referred to be tested for enrichment services by filling out a referral form. In Monroe School District, we universally screen all second and fourth grade students so referral forms are not necessary. Parents of students in grades K-1, 3, 5-11 can be referred using the [Referral Form](#) on Skyward, available on November 29, 2021. The CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) is used to screen students.

Identification Process

The purpose of identification for Highly Capable Program (Hi-Cap) services is to find students whose potential and/or performance is significant enough to require modifications in their instructional program. Following is the step by step process used to identify students:



Step One

Throughout November, all staff are notified of the timeline, which includes the referral, testing and notification windows. In addition, classroom teachers and paraeducators are noticing students that show unusual connections of ideas, or other characteristics of highly capable learners. [Washington Administrative Code Chapter 392.170.042](#)

Step Two

In late November, a referral window opens. This is publicized through the Monroe School District website, the school newsletters, and additional avenues of communication such as social media and School Messenger. At this time, parents or guardians may complete an online referral for students in grades K-1, 3, and 5-11 through Skyward who clearly demonstrate characteristics of highly capable learners and for students whose common assessments indicate achievement well above grade level. Teachers or other staff may fill out the Referral Form below. The referral window is open for two weeks and requires permission from the parent and/or guardian.

Students in grades two and four are universally screened using the CogAT and therefore will not need a referral form. [Washington Administrative Code Chapter 392.170.047](#) and [Revised Code of Washington Chapter 28A.185.030](#)

Step Three

In February, the CogAT Screener is administered during the school day to all second and fourth graders and any referred students in grades K-1, 3, and 5-11.

Step Four

After the results are posted parents and/or guardians will be notified via email and USPS. Permission to continue testing will be required of students in grades two and four and the permission slip will be included with the results. For parents and/or guardians of students in grades two and four that pass the screener, permission is needed in order to continue the testing process. [Washington Administrative Code Chapter 392.170.047](#)

Step Five

Students take the CogAT Post Screener in March. The district's Multidisciplinary Selection Committee convenes and reviews the CogAT results and other data points such as WA Kids, Smarter Balanced Assessment, English Language Proficiency Assessment, Classroom-based evidence, etc. and makes eligibility decisions for the following year. Parents will receive a letter informing them of their child's eligibility and placement. They may choose to accept or decline services. Parent permission is required for program services. Parents/guardians should be aware that declining services in a clustered classroom or placement in a self-contained classroom means that if they wish to have their child participate in the future, it may be necessary to screen again. [Washington Administrative Code Chapter 392.170.060](#); [392.170.075](#)

Elementary Placement Options

Cluster Classroom Placement

In this placement, eligible students are served in their home schools in cluster classrooms. Clusters of three to five highly capable students are placed together in general education classrooms (Gentry, 2014). Their classroom teachers use a variety of methods to provide continuous learning progress, challenge, and enrichment. Examples include, but are not limited to: special projects, online math problem-solving, and small group instruction. Eligibility is based on students who perform in the top 5-7% of their peers.

Excel Classroom Placement

The Excel program, configured year to year, is a self-contained, intermediate classroom located at Salem Woods Elementary that provides our most highly capable students with the opportunity to engage with their academic peers in rigorous, challenging, and enriching curriculum (Rogers, 2010). In this placement, Washington State's standards-based curriculum has been modified to provide in-depth learning experiences through the use of advanced math and language arts instruction, problem and project-based learning, simulations, Socratic Seminars, technology integration, and challenge in all areas of the curriculum. Eligibility is geared towards the top 2-3% of the student population.

After School Enrichment Opportunities

We recognize that additional enrichment services are required for students with high mental abilities in order to reach their academic potential (ALZOUBI, 2014). After school activities ranging from 1-4 sessions are available to highly capable students. Transportation home is not provided. Enrichment opportunities may vary from school to school.

Middle School Placement Options

Cluster Classroom Placement

In this placement, eligible students are served in their home schools through the use of cluster classrooms in which a group of other highly capable students are placed together (Rogers, 2010). Their classroom teachers use a variety of methods to provide continuous learning progress, challenge, and enrichment. Examples include, but are not limited to: special projects, online math problem-solving, and small group instruction. Eligibility is based on students who perform in the top 5-7% of their peers.

After School Enrichment Opportunities

We recognize that additional enrichment services are required for students with high mental abilities in order to reach their academic potential (ALZOUBI, 2014). After school activities ranging from 1-4 sessions are available to highly capable students. Transportation home is not provided. Enrichment opportunities may vary from school to school.

High School Placement Options

Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the High School

These courses offer industry-level training and experience in addition to job shadowing and mentorships. Learn more about [CTE](#) at Monroe High School.

Advanced Placement (AP) in the High School

These classes offer university level course work. Passing a rigorous final exam is required to determine student eligibility for credit. For more information, visit the [AP Central Website](#). Link to [AP Classes](#) at Monroe High School.

College in the High School

Monroe High School has partnered with Everett Community College to offer college credit courses to students. Read more about [College in the High School](#) on Monroe High School's website.

Running Start

The Running Start Program is a partnership between Skagit Valley College and Oak Harbor High School. The program allows high school juniors and seniors to attend community college classes and earn college credits that may also be used toward high school graduation requirements. Learn more about Monroe High's [Running Start](#).

Appeal Procedure

Every effort is made to ensure the integrity and fairness of the identification process. Parents/guardians may appeal the decision of the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee. An appeal must be submitted in writing within ten (10) business days of receiving the final recommendation regarding the student.

The written appeal must include supporting details for evidence of outstanding abilities of the student. Appeals for reconsideration of students who have not met the assessment criteria are reviewed by the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee. The Highly Capable Director will determine appropriate action, which will be one of the following:

- Continued denial from entry to the program based on data presented;
- Request for further testing;
- Request for further information and/ or data prior to making decision;
- Change of status to "qualified".

The decision will be based on the evidence presented.

Policies

Once a student has qualified for the elementary program, no additional testing is necessary. However, students eligible for the cluster classroom can be screened again the following year to determine eligibility for the self-contained classroom. Additionally, students who were not eligible for program services may be referred and retested the following year. Hi-Cap program services are determined by the district and provided on a year-to-year basis. Services are provided to the extent that district resources allow. [Monroe School District School Board Policy 2190](#)

Exit and Change of Placement Procedures

All placements in the program are provisional and will undergo periodic review to ensure that each student is demonstrating academic progress. Once identified, highly capable students receive ongoing support across the K12 continuum of services. Student progress is monitored throughout the school year. Classroom, district and state assessments are utilized to assure that highly capable students are making progress appropriate for their skills and abilities.

Request to End Placement

A parent/guardian may request, in writing, that their child be withdrawn from the program at any time.

Once a student has been voluntarily withdrawn from program services, a parent/guardian must re-initiate the identification process if desired, at a later date, to reapply for the program.

Newly Enrolled Students

New students in grades one through eleventh grade who have participated in Highly Capable Programs in previous districts will be considered for the Hi-Cap program. Documentation of assessment equal to CogAT is necessary for uninterrupted services. However, services are not guaranteed to be the same as the prior school district's. Parents/guardians are advised to provide contact information from the outgoing school district so previous assessment data can be used to determine eligibility and placement.

Timeline

This timeline is generic. Please visit the [Monroe School District](#) website for the timeline created for this year.

November	Notification of Highly Capable Referral Window
Nov.-December	Highly Capable Referral Window
February	CogAT Screener is administered
March	CogAT Post-Screen is administered to students passing the Screener
April	Multidisciplinary Selection Committee decides student eligibility
April	Parents notified of qualification status
May	Parent Permission to receive services is due to the district office
June	Building administrators complete placement for following school year

Characteristics of Highly Capable Students

Washington State defines highly capable students as those “who perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels compared with others of their age, experiences or environments. Outstanding abilities are seen within students’ general intellectual aptitude, specific academic abilities, and/or creative productivities within a specific domain. These students are present not only in the general education populace but are present in all protected classes...”

The purpose of identification for Highly Capable Program services is to find students whose potential and/or performance is significant enough to require modification in their instructional program. Use the following lists of characteristics to identify and refer students during the referral process.

Learning	
Perform approximately 1.5 years or higher than their peers	Speak and write directly and to the point
Use unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age; possess high verbal ability	Like to organize and bring structure to things, people, and situations
Demonstrate advanced comprehension of word nuances, metaphors, and abstract ideas (the subtleties of language)	Articulate ideas and communicate well with others; can find various ways of expressing ideas so others will understand
Put ideas or things together that are not typical	Ask extensive or unusual questions
Transfer learning from one situation to another	Retain a great deal of information
Organize data and information to discover mathematical patterns	Demonstrate strong critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills
Have creative (unusual or divergent) ways to solve math problems	Learn and acquire skills more quickly and with less practice
Display a strong number sense (e.g., makes sense of large and small numbers, estimates easily and appropriately)	Demonstrate the ability to generate a large number of ideas, alternatives, or solutions to problems or questions; exhibits flexible thinking
Frequently solve math problems abstractly, without the need for manipulatives or concrete materials	Demonstrate thinking that is abstract, complex, logical, and insightful; exhibit flexible thinking
Regularly use a variety of representations to explain math concepts (written explanations, pictorial, graphic, equations, etc.)	Read a great deal, usually preferring adult level books; does not avoid difficult materials; may show a preference for biography, autobiography, encyclopedias, and atlases
Enjoy solving problems, especially with numbers and puzzles	Elaborate well
Demonstrate an understanding of complicated material through analytical reasoning ability	Reveal originality in oral and other forms of expression (such as music, dance, drama, drawing, playing)
Have rapid insight into cause-effect relationships; tries to discover the how and why of things	Grasp the relationship of individual steps to a whole process
Have quick recall and mastery of information	Can support beliefs with data

Work Ethic	
Become absorbed and truly involved in certain topics or problems; are sometimes difficult to move on to another topic	Prefer to work independently; require little direction from teachers
Are easily bored with routine tasks	Demonstrate tenacity when posed with challenges
Finish work very quickly and with high accuracy	Strive toward high quality in written and oral work
Are highly self-motivated and self-initiating; might seek out opportunities to learn on their own	Like to engage in class discussions and offer opinions that are appropriately related to the topic
Persistently work on tasks even when setbacks occur; seek task completion	Demonstrate a commitment to long-term projects when interested in a topic
Are high risk-takers	Have an unusual alertness
Thrive in problem situations; usually select more difficult tasks	Have keen powers of observation
Consistently turn in assignments on time	Possess a passion for particular topics
Have strong attendance	Organize their work well

Creativity	
Are interested in experimenting and doing things differently	Might produce work that provokes a lively audience response
Are adventurous and speculative	Are innovative
Display a good deal of intellectual playfulness; fantasize and imagine ("I wonder what would happen if...")	May break rules or conventions to create a powerful new statement
Demonstrate more than one way to solve a problem; sometimes have creative solutions	Are concerned with adapting, improving and modifying institutions, objects, and systems
Are preoccupied with own thoughts; tend to daydream	Have a wide range of interests
Have a highly developed curiosity; ask extensive or unusual questions	Have a keen and/or unusual sense of humor
Possess a vivid imagination	Possess a sense of wonder

Social Emotional	
Prefer adults	Are independent
Demonstrate understanding of idealism and a sense of justice from an early age; have concerns with social and political issues and injustices	May have problems with friendships; may be isolated due to lack of intellectual peers or students with similar interests
Have a nonconforming attitude, do not fear being different	Are highly sensitive towards self and others
Possess deep, intense feelings, opinions, and reactions	Show little patience for routine procedures and drills
Demonstrate cooperative behavior when working with others; exhibit leadership abilities	Have a high degree of common sense
May mature at different rates than same-age peers	Are highly self-critical

Culturally Diverse: Linguistics & Economics

Are reading above grade level in their native language and in English	Demonstrate a strong sense of altruism (i.e., caring for others)
Show high ability in mathematics	Are willing to translate for others
Are advanced in creative domains (fluency, elaboration, originality, and flexibility)	Have superior knowledge of phrases, heritage dialects; have the ability to translate meanings in English
Are leaders in multiple settings (playground, home, clubs, etc.)	Have a grasp of jokes and puns related to cultural differences
Demonstrate language proficiency levels that are above general education students who are also ELL	Balance behaviors expected in both their heritage and the new culture
Learn multiple languages at an accelerated pace	Are willing to share their heritage or culture
Show the ability to code switch (alternate between two or more languages within a single conversation)	Show a strong sense of pride in their culture and ethnic background
Demonstrate a global sense of community and respect for cultural differences	Demonstrate an ability to express emotions (not necessarily with words)
Have an ability to explain native dialect and idioms (e.g., play on words, slang)	Demonstrate a richness in the imagination through informal language
Demonstrate an above level proficiency of English language growth	Demonstrate a questioning orientation (i.e., strong curiosity and a tendency to ask many questions)
Demonstrate ease of adapting to new environments	Want to teach others words from their heritage language
Demonstrate a high degree of emotional responsiveness (i.e., spontaneity, openness, and ease in sharing feelings with others)	Demonstrate effective communication through expressive speech that is rich with imagery
Demonstrate an interest in cultures other than own	Shows awareness of themselves as a capable learner

Abilities in Students with Learning Difficulties

May struggle with basic skills and reading due to processing deficits	Sometimes appear immature due to use of anger, withdrawal, and/or crying in dealing with difficulties
Are sensitive towards own deficits	Require teacher support and feedback in deficit areas
Possess strong observational skills; may have deficits in memory skills	Have high verbal ability but problems with written language; may use language inappropriately
May emerge as leaders among less traditional students but deficits may also impact leadership abilities	Have a passion for particular topics to the exclusion of others
Frequently have problems with concentration but in areas of interest, they can focus for long periods of time	Have strong critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills
Are often unwilling to take academic risks; may take risks in non-school-related areas without considering consequences	May need compensatory strategies to ease the learning; may engage in antisocial behaviors; are generally sensitive to the feelings of others
Have an unusual imagination	May have problems with friends due to poor social skills
Have wide interests but deficits may hinder the ability to follow them	May appear to be loners since they do not represent a typical model of giftedness or ability
Can be more independent in areas of interest	May appear stubborn and inflexible
Can be critical of self and others	Generate original but sometimes "bizarre" ideas
Excel in solving "real world" problems	Have non-school-related interests

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the CogAT?

- A. The Cognitive Abilities Test is a multiple choice, norm-referenced cognitive abilities test yields separate scores for three reasoning abilities – Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal. The Verbal battery of the test assesses vocabulary and verbal reasoning. The Quantitative battery addresses number relationships and equations. The Nonverbal battery measures the manipulation and classification of figures.

Q. What is the difference between the Screener and the Post-Screener?

- A. The Screener is the first three subtests of each assessment. The Post-Screener is the last two subtests of each assessment. A full CogAT profile score is provided upon completion.

Cognitive Abilities Test

CogAT	Verbal	Quantitative	Non-Verbal
Screener	Picture/Verbal Analogies	Number Analogies	Figure Matrices
Post Screener	Sentence Completion	Number Puzzles	Paper Folding
Post Screener	Picture/Verbal Classification	Number Series	Figure Classification

Q. If students are absent on the day of the CogAT, will there be a makeup test?

- A. We will do our best to make sure all absent students have an opportunity for a make-up test, but we cannot make any guarantees.

Q. If my child qualified for a cluster classroom last year, would s/he need to go through the screening process again to be offered a seat in the Excel (self-contained) classroom?

- A. If numbers support an Excel classroom, the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee will consider new and previously identified students for the Excel classroom.

Q. Who administers the tests to the students?

- A. Teachers of second and fourth grade students will proctor the CogAT Screener. Building Coordinators will proctor (or oversee) to all referred students.

Q. How will the district notify me of the results?

- A. You will receive notification via USPS and email. Make sure that you have an updated email address on file with Skyward.

If you have additional questions, please direct them to Sandra Monson:

monsons@monroe.wednet.edu

Bibliography

ALZOUBI, S. M. (2014). Effects of Enrichment Programs on the Academic Achievement of Gifted. *Journal for the Education of the Young Scientist and Giftedness*, Volume 2, Issue 2, 22-27.

Marcia Gentry, P. (2014). *Total School Cluster Grouping & Differentiation*. Waco, Texas: Prufrock Press.