

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 possible characteristics to help 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 | Grasp the relationship of individual steps to a whole process |
| 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) | Ask extensive or unusual questions |
| 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 | Demonstrate the ability to generate a large number of ideas, alternatives, or solutions to problems or questions; exhibits flexible thinking |
| 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 and 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 | Demonstrate awareness of self as a capable learner |
| Demonstrate an independent nature | Demonstrate a keen sense of justice |

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 | May have problems with friends due to poor social skills |
| Frequently have problems with concentration but in areas of interest, they are able to 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 | Have wide interests but deficits may hinder the ability to follow them |
| Have an unusual imagination | Have a passion for particular topics to the exclusion of others |
| May need compensatory strategies to ease the learning; may engage in antisocial behaviors; are generally sensitive to the feelings of others | 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 |