

Highly Capable Program

Program Overview

The Cashmere School District's Highly Capable Program is designed to meet the advanced academic and social/emotional needs of students in grades K-12 with exceptional abilities. The program provides a rigorous curriculum in an encouraging and supportive environment where teachers challenge students to reach their full potential. Students qualify for Highly Capable Program services based on their ability or potential to perform at an advanced level of academic excellence as indicated through cognitive and academic testing. For current definitions from the field of gifted education, see the [National Association for Gifted Children](#) . Also see Cashmere School District Policy Number [2190](#) and Procedure [2190 P](#) for a description of program services.

Definition of “Highly Capable”

Highly Capable students perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels when 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 in the general populace and within all protected classes. (WAC 392-170-035)

Learning Characteristics of Highly Capable Students

Students who are Highly Capable may possess, but are not limited to, these 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 abstraction and complexity earlier than their chronological peers;
- Creative ability to make unique connections among ideas and concepts;
- Ability to learn quickly in their area(s) of intellectual strength; and
- Capacity for intense concentration and/or focus.

(WAC 392-170-036)

Highly Capable Program Services

The priority of our Highly Capable Program is to match students with the most appropriate services to meet their needs, understanding that the needs of these students vary and may change over time. By offering levels of service across grade levels and schools, we ensure both equitable access for all learners, as well as flexibility in meeting the needs of all learners.

[Differentiation Within the Classroom \(Kindergarten-Grade 12\)](#)

Differentiation is open access and part of the curriculum for all students. Teachers integrate critical thinking, depth, and complexity into lessons. These services are available to all students at all schools.

Differentiation in Areas of Academic Strength (Kindergarten-Grade 12)

Students receive differentiated instruction in areas of specific academic strength (one or more content areas). This instruction takes place within the regular classroom in a mixed-ability setting. Eligibility is determined by both formal identification as Highly Capable through the district identification process, as well as school-level determination based on observation and input from those who know the child best. These services are available at all schools. For example, students receive individual or small group instruction/learning opportunity based on academic need within the content area.

Strength-Based Student Grouping (Grade 1-8)

Students participating in these services receive differentiated instruction through full-time participation in “Cluster Groupings” where other students with similar strengths are grouped within a mixed-ability classroom. These afford Highly Capable students the opportunity to collaborate with their intellectual peers in a rich and dynamic setting. Teachers extend and enrich the study of grade level standards in the student's area(s) of strength.

Highly Capable Extension Groupings (Grade K-8)

Students participating in these services are enrolled in advanced studies focusing on academic depth and complexity in ELA, Math or both. Students receive differentiation in the depth, breadth, and pace of instruction with an emphasis on critical and creative thinking. In this rigorous setting, students are expected to meet standards above their regular grade level. At Vale Elementary we call these classes “Book Club” or “Math Club.” Students at CMS know these classes as “Extension Academies.”

Core Math Acceleration (Grade 7-8)

Students participating in these services receive instruction within strength-based groups focused on math. Students are accelerated by taking Pre-Algebra in 7th grade followed by Algebra in 8th grade if students demonstrate success in Pre-Algebra. Students enrolled in Pre-Algebra receive compacted instruction, meaning Pre-Algebra includes 7th and 8th grade math materials.

Advanced Placement, Honors English, Dual Credit, College in the High School, Career and Technical Education-CTE (9-12)

Highly Capable students have the opportunity to learn and collaborate with other high achieving students in a variety of content areas. Students and families have the opportunity to develop a post-secondary pathway of rigorous classes of interest. Many of these classes provide students college credit, mentorships, and advanced skills.

Other Optional Enrichment Services:

Highly Capable qualified students have the opportunity to choose to get involved in the following enrichment opportunities:

- Pull-Togethers: Students are excused from class one day a week over a 3 to 6 week period to get involved in STEAM projects. (K-4)
- Field Trips (K-8)
- After school programs (K-8)
- Robotics or TSA (Technology Student Association) (K-8)
- Academic Competitions such as Knowledge Bowl

Referrals:

Referrals will be collected during the referral window, which is posted on the CSD website. No nominations will be accepted outside of this window. A student may be nominated by a parent, teacher, community member, or self. You may also request a blank nomination form from your school's office.

Identification:

It is our mission in the Cashmere School District to provide all students with appropriate educational programs to meet their academic and social-emotional needs. Our priority is to match students with the most appropriate service. All students have the opportunity to receive differentiated instruction in alignment with their academic ability and potential.

Screening and Assessment:

Cashmere School District follows an objective identification process using multiple measures of data and equity considerations to ensure that the district identification process applies equitably to all enrolled students and families from every racial, ethnic and socio-economic population present in the public-school population served.

Identification Process:

The Multi-Disciplinary Committee will convene to review referrals. This Committee is composed of a Highly Capable teacher, school psychologist, an administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's Highly Capable Program, and additional professionals, if any, that the district deems desirable. The Committee will evaluate individual student profiles using a blind (no name) process.

The selection decision is based on a preponderance of evidence from the profile data demonstrating that a student is in need of Highly Capable services. A single assessment score or indicator will not prevent a student's selection for the Highly

Capable Program. If properly validated tests are not available, the professional judgment of the qualified district personnel shall determine eligibility of the student based upon evidence of cognitive ability and/or academic achievement.

All parents will receive a letter explaining the determination. The student's program placement is flexible and will be reviewed annually to ensure an appropriate fit.

Appeals Process:

Parents and legal guardians have the right to appeal the Highly Capable Selection Committee's decision. Individuals appealing the Committee's decision must submit a letter requesting review of the placement decision. The written request must include reasons for the appeal and, to support reconsideration, provide additional evidence of significantly advanced cognitive or academic levels and/or outstanding intellectual, academic, or creative abilities. Appeals must be based upon one of the following conditions:

- A condition or circumstance believed to have caused a misinterpretation of the testing results, i.e., incorrect birthdate or grade level used in calculating the student's score.
- An inequitable application of the identification procedures, i.e. the applicant's proficiency with the English language.
- 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.
- The appeal request and supporting evidence must be submitted within ten (10) school days of the Highly Capable Selection Committee's decision notification. Appeals can be emailed to Rhett Morgan, rmorgan@cashmere.wednet.edu.
- The Multi-Disciplinary Committee will review the student's file, assessment profile data, and additional evidence provided in the request for appeal. Appeals are reviewed by a District Appeals Committee that consists of an administrator, psychologist, principal, and teacher. All submitted documents are closely and carefully reviewed. The Committee is looking for evidence that the results of the testing are not a true representation of the child's abilities. The decision of the Committee may include:
 - Upholding the original decision of the Highly Capable Selection Committee.
 - Reversing the decision of the Highly Capable Selection Committee.

A decision will be made by the Committee within ten (10) school days after receipt of written request for reconsideration. The parent/legal guardian will be notified of the decision in writing. The decision of the District Appeals Committee is final.

Exit Process:

A parent or legal guardian may request that the student be withdrawn or request a furlough from the program, or a student may voluntarily withdraw or request a furlough from the program. A meeting will be convened by the Highly Capable Program Coordinator to discuss the request. If the parent or legal guardian desires to withdraw the student from the program, the student will be excused or temporarily furloughed from the program. The Highly Capable Selection Committee will determine if identification procedures are necessary for exited students wishing to reenter the program in the future.