

HUMANITIES PLUS

Middle School Program for Highly Capable Students

The Issaquah School District has implemented a district wide middle school program for high performing and capable students – Humanities Plus. It is in all five middle schools and has a common curriculum and entrance requirements.

Program Characteristics

1. The program has a common name in all middle schools – Humanities Plus.
2. It consists of block-scheduled language arts and social studies courses. (There is a separate process for math placement options.) There will be two LA/SS sections, ideally in the morning and afternoon, to provide scheduling options for students who may need to accommodate other courses that are offered only at a certain time.
3. The identification for the entering 6th graders is handled centrally and is the same for all schools. Counselors, teachers, and administrators have established identification criteria. Data will be obtained and weighted according to items on the Identification Matrix. A review committee will verify placements across the district.
4. By June of each year, the district office will provide a list of students who are eligible for the Humanities Plus program to each school. Students will be listed in ranked order by qualifying criteria. Each school will fill two LA/SS blocks with students as they qualify.
5. Students may remain in the Humanities Plus program for the next grade level if they maintain a grade average of A to B minus. If they receive a C plus or lower after a probationary period, they will need to withdraw and re-qualify to be readmitted. New students or additional students who may wish to participate can enter in the 7th or 8th grades through a district process, as space is available.
6. Teachers will have staff development available to assist them in preparing and delivering the Humanities Plus classes. This training will be developed in conjunction with the district Teaching & Learning Services Department and may be supplemented by outside training as it becomes available.
7. The program will be supervised in each school by the principal and will be supported by central coordination and training.

Retention Procedure

To Continue in the Program

Students who wish to continue in the Humanities Plus program must maintain a B minus grade or better in both Language Arts and Social Studies at every six week mid-trimester grade check and on each Trimester Report Card.

Academic Alert

Humanities Plus students will be placed on Academic Alert if the student receives a grade below a B minus in either class (LA or SS) at these grade reporting periods:

- The Six Week Mid-Trimester Progress Report for the First Trimester
- The First Trimester Report Card
- The Six Week Mid-Trimester Progress Report for the Second Trimester
- The Second Trimester Report Card
- The Six Week Mid-Trimester Progress Report for the Third Trimester
- The Third Trimester Report Card

Probation and Student/Parent Notification

Students who are placed on Academic Alert will be given a six week or twelve week probation period. Both the student and his/her parents or guardians will receive a letter that the student's grade has dropped below a B minus and that the student has been placed on probation.

The length of the probation period will depend on when the student earned the sub-par grade. Students will **not** be transferred out of the program in the middle of a trimester. Therefore, if a student goes on probation at a six week mid-trimester progress report, the student has six weeks to raise the grade by the Final Trimester Report Card. However, if a student earns a sub-par grade on a Trimester Report Card, the student has 12 weeks to raise the grade – by the next Trimester Report Card. Here are some scenarios to help explain this policy:

- The student earns a C plus or lower at the six week progress report in October. The student does not raise the grade above a C plus by the First Trimester Report Card and is transferred out of the program.
- A student earns a C plus or lower on the Second Trimester Report Card. The student does not raise the grade by the Third Trimester Report Card in June, and is not eligible to continue in the program during his or her next middle school year.
- A student earns a C plus or lower on the Third Trimester Report Card and is placed on probation. The student continues in Humanities Plus during his or her next middle school year, but only on probation. The student raises the grade to a B minus or above by the First Trimester Report Card and is eligible to continue in the program.

Raising a Grade

Humanities Plus is a performance based program. It is designed for students who want to make an extra effort to learn and students who will embrace a challenge and work hard to develop the academic and organizational skills to achieve. It is a privilege, not a right to be in this program. Students whose grade falters due to a lack of effort will conference with their teacher on how that effort can be increased, but ultimately, the responsibility to make that effort lies with the student. Students who are giving a 100% effort, but who seem to be struggling with the content and skills required by the course, will also meet with their teacher on how they can improve their study habits and organization skills in order to “make the grade”. However, Humanities Plus is designed as a more rigorous course than regular LA/SS courses. **This level of rigor will be maintained for all students.**

Parents are encouraged to work with and help their students to improve learning styles and skills. Teachers will make every effort to keep parents informed of their student’s progress, including parent and student conferences. Parents can monitor their student’s progress by consistently checking the online grade book to make sure that their student is turning work in and receiving acceptable grades. Teachers will work hand in hand with parents who want to teach their child how to learn and achieve.

Transferring Out of the Program

If a student does not raise the grade by the Trimester Report Card, a letter will be sent home notifying the parent and student that the student is not eligible to continue to participate in the program. Every effort will be made to transfer the student into a regular LA/SS or Humanities class with a minimum of disruption to his or her schedule.

Open Spots

If a spot becomes available in a Humanities Plus class, it will be filled off of the wait list at the Trimester Report Card period.

HUMANITIES PLUS

Program Identification Process

2012 – 2013 School Year

Identification

A pre-identification score sheet will be created for each current fifth grader that applies for the program. Students will be identified by the middle school attendance area school for 6th grade.

Students new to Issaquah in 5th grade will have their score on the Stanford 10 or other achievement test scores in Reading substituted for the 4th grade reading MSP.

All program application and information materials are available on line. Each student and family will be asked to submit an application, indicating they will be willing to meet the criteria for program participation and understand how the Humanities Plus program will work. Students will also be asked to submit, in their own handwriting, a brief written statement about why they would like to be in the program. Both the parents and student will sign the application.

For all students who apply for further consideration, the Identification Matrix will be completed. (See the attached **sample** matrixes for additional scores to be added during the process and weighting for each score.)

When all scoring sheets are complete, they will be brought to a Program Review Committee (PRC) for final ranking and decision about entrance. The PRC may consist of a counselor from each middle school, the program supervisor and the scoring coordinator.

Classes are typically filled to the level of other middle school Humanities classes. Spaces will be left at each school for potential new arrivals over the summer that may score above the lowest placement score on the existing class lists. If no such students arrive, additional students from the wait list will be moved into the class.

Middle schools will be notified of qualified students by the end of the school year, sooner if possible.

Never attended Issaquah School District prior to 6th grade

Students who never attended Issaquah School District prior to 6th grade should submit any and all standardized test scores in Reading and Writing, a copy of their most recent 5th grade report card, and a handwritten statement about why he/she would like to be in Humanities Plus.

Middle School Humanities Plus Program
 School Year 2012-2013
 Sixth Grade Identification **SAMPLE** Matrix

4th Grade MSP Reading	Scores	Points	
	440+	10	
	430-439	7	
	420-429	3	
	400-419	1	<input type="text"/>

5th Grade Stanford Reading (If no MSP then Stanford score is doubled)	97+	10	
	95-96	7	
	90-94	3	
	80-89	1	
	< 80	0	<input type="text"/>

5th Grade Report Card Reading The number of "4" grades out of possible three on 2 nd grading period report card.	3/3	6	
	2/3	3	
	1/3	1	
			<input type="text"/>

4th Grade MSP Writing	12	10	
	11	7	
	10	3	<input type="text"/>

5th Grade Report Card Writing The number of "4" grades out of possible four on 2 nd grading period report card.	4/4	6	
	2-3/4	3	
	1/4	1	
			<input type="text"/>

5th Grade Report Card Social/Learning Skills The number of "4" grades out of possible nine on 2 nd grading period report card.	7-9/9	6	
	4-6/9	3	
	1-3/9	1	
			<input type="text"/>

Name _____

TOTAL

Elementary School _____

Middle School _____

Test scores will be obtained by District Office if taken in the Issaquah School District

SAMPLE MATRIX

Middle School Humanities Plus Program
 School Year 2012-2013
 Sixth Grade Identification **SAMPLE** Matrix for the **MERLIN** student

4th Grade MSP Reading	Scores		Points
	440+	10	
	430-439	7	
	420-429	3	<input type="text"/>
	400-419	1	
5th Grade Stanford Reading (If no MSP then Stanford score is doubled)	97+	10	
	95-96	7	
	90-94	3	
	80-89	1	<input type="text"/>
	< 80	0	
5th Grade Report Card Reading The number of "3" or "4" grades out of possible three on 2 nd grading period report card.	3/3	6	
	2/3	3	
	1/3	1	<input type="text"/>
4th Grade MSP Writing	12	10	
	11	7	<input type="text"/>
	10	3	
5th Grade Report Card Writing The number of "3" or "4" grades out of possible five on 2 nd grading period report card.	4-5/5	6	
	2-3/5	3	
	1/5	1	<input type="text"/>
5th Grade Report Card Social/Learning Skills The number of "3" or "4" grades out of possible eight on 2 nd grading period report card.	7-8/8	6	
	4-6/8	3	<input type="text"/>
	1-3/8	1	
Name _____			TOTAL <input type="text"/>

Elementary School _____

Middle School _____

Test scores will be obtained by District Office if taken in the Issaquah School District

SAMPLE MATRIX

Issaquah School District

APPLICATION FOR THE HUMANITIES PLUS PROGRAM

**Sixth Grade Program for Advanced Students
Spring 2012**

Student's Name: _____ Middle School (12-13) _____

Address: _____ Home phone _____

Elementary School _____ Fifth Grade Teacher _____

Parent(s) Name(s): _____

Daytime phone: (mother) _____ (father) _____

We understand the requirements of the program and want to apply to have our child participate in the Humanities Plus program next year as a 6th grader. We also understand that this application doesn't guarantee automatic placement in the class. Placements will be determined through a weighted evaluation of additional data, as outlined on the Identification Matrix.

Our child has attached a single-page, handwritten statement of interest in the program. While the statement will not be scored as part of the application process, it will give the Placement Review Committee a sense of his/her commitment to schoolwork and willingness to participate fully. A copy of his/her March report card is also attached.

Families and students will be notified of placement by July 13, 2012. If you do not receive a letter please contact this office at 425-837-7025.

I have read the 2012-2013 Humanities Plus Program information and I am aware of the expectations of being in the class if accepted.

Parent signature

Student's signature

Date

Date

Return this application with
(1) the student statement and
(2) a copy of his/her 5th
grade March report card

To:
Humanities Plus
Middle Level Education
Issaquah School District,
565 NW Holly St.
Issaquah, WA 98027

Must be received by
April 20, 2012 (4:00 p.m.)