

Information about the Highly Capable Program for Families of Kindergarten Students

October 2019

To the parents of Issaquah School District kindergarteners:

The Issaquah School District Highly Capable Program provides a continuum of services to eligible students in grades K-2. The Highly Capable Program provides students with academic acceleration and added rigor.

K-2 Primary Enrichment Program (PEP)

Students who meet eligibility assessment criteria, and are selected for the Highly Capable Program, are offered participation in PEP. This is a pull-out/push-in program offered at all elementary schools. Kindergarten students, who are selected, attend PEP classes (beginning in the second half of their kindergarten year) for 30 minutes per week for math services and receive differentiated reading instruction in their classroom. Students who test academically and cognitively at an exceptionally high level in the areas of reading, math, verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative abilities are possible candidates for PEP.

Testing for PEP

The Cognitive Abilities Screening Test (CogAT Screener) form 7 will be given in all kindergarten classrooms the week of November 4th. Using the score results from the CogAT screener, students at the highest achievement level will be selected to go on for second level eligibility testing December 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th. Make-ups are scheduled for December 16th, 17th and 18th. Make-ups cannot be accommodated outside of the testing window. CogAT Screener scores will be available in Family Access by mid-December.

The Issaquah School District screens ALL kindergarten students for the Highly Capable Program so there is no need for individuals to refer a student. If you do not want your student screened for the Highly Capable Program, please complete the Opt -out Form on the website at <https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/academics/assessment/highly-capable-testing>, scan the enclosed QR code, or pick it up at your neighborhood school office. This form is due to your neighborhood school office by October 18th.



Second level eligibility testing uses the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) form 7 in verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative, and the Iowa Achievement Test in math and reading. You will be notified in November or early December if your student has qualified for further testing. Notification will include a parent permission form. Testing will occur in the school during the school day. Please note:

*If you believe an **extraordinary** circumstance occurred **during the testing period** that may negatively affect the validity of the test results (such as a death in the family or extreme physical ailment) written communication to this office **within two weeks of the end of district testing window** is appreciated to support the appeal process if necessary.*

Please note: Results from outside testing agencies are not accepted for entry into the Highly Capable Program. Screening assessment results are not subject to appeal.

For Students Who Qualify for Second Level Testing

In January, the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MDSC) will review students' assessment results from second level testing to determine possible selection for the Highly Capable Program. After that a letter will be sent via US mail which will include the student's score report, notification of the student's eligibility status for admission into the Highly Capable Program for the 2019-2020 school year, and if applicable, an invitation to participate.

Please do not contact this office or your school prior to receiving your student's score report and eligibility letter, which will arrive in January or early February. The committee does not make final placement decisions prior to this time.

Retesting

All students will be retested in the spring of second grade to determine eligibility for the Highly Capable Program in grades 3-5. Second grade assessment results for students already qualified for services in the Primary Enrichment Program will be used to determine appropriate placement decisions for grades 3-5.

Sincerely,

Susan Mundell
Executive Director of Elementary Education

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Director of Elementary Special Programs

Appeal Process

The Issaquah School District, in compliance with the Washington State rules for Highly Capable Programs (WAC 392-170-076), has an appeal process. Appeals of the selection decision are accepted on the **Selection Decision Appeal** form. These forms are found on the district website.

Screening decisions, and/or program placement decisions are not subject to appeal, however, appeals of the selection decision may be filed based on one of the following criteria:

- An **extraordinary** circumstance occurred **during the testing period** (such as a death in the family or extreme physical ailment) that may negatively affect the validity of the test results. Notification to the district in writing within two weeks of the end of district testing window is appreciated to support the appeal process.
- The suspicion of an error in the administration of the assessment.
- A misapplication, miscalculation or misinterpretation of the scores.

All appeals go before the Appeal Review Team. Notification of the decision (either i.e., approved or denied) will be sent by mail. No in-person hearings will be held by the Appeal Review Team. The purpose of the Appeal Review Team is to consider individual circumstances based on one of the criteria above, that may have impacted your child's evaluation data. It is the goal of the Issaquah School District to provide all of our students with appropriate academic services.

Additional information may be submitted to explain the appeal. Please note: No outside testing will be considered.

Questions about the appeal process can be directed to the Marianne Dikran, Assistant to the Director of Elementary Special Programs, at 425-837-7120.

Highly Capable Program Exit Procedure

The Issaquah School District, in compliance with the Washington State rules for Highly Capable Programs (WAC 392-170-047), has a procedure to allow students to exit the Highly Capable Program.

The Highly Capable Program consists of a variety of models and services and therefore is dynamic and fluid. Students will be exited from the program for one of the following reasons:

1. Parents/guardians request that the student no longer take part in the services. In this case, the parents/guardians complete the exit request form and send it to the district office. The form will then be placed in the student's file.
2. A student, teacher, principal and/or program administrator may request the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee convene to review a student's profile to determine if learning needs are best met with Highly Capable program services based on assessment data and classroom performance. The committee may request additional evidence of student capabilities and/or willingness to participate in the program. If the committee determines that highly capable services are no longer appropriate to fit the student's needs, it will be recommended that the student be exited from the program.