Information about the Highly Capable Program for Families of Second Grade Students

November 2019

To the parents of Issaquah School District second graders:

The Issaquah School District offers a Highly Capable Program for eligible students in grades K-12. The Highly Capable Program provides students with academic acceleration and added rigor. All second grade students are tested to determine whether or not they are eligible for Highly Capable designation.

All students will be tested in the winter and spring of second grade to determine eligibility for the Highly Capable Program in grades 3-12. Second grade assessment results for students already qualified for services in the Primary Enrichment Program (PEP) will be used to determine appropriate placement decisions for grades 3-5. If a PEP student does not test in second grade, the student will be placed in either SAGE Math or SAGE Reading depending on area of strength.

Programs for Students in Grades 3 through 5

MERLIN—is a self-contained all-day program currently housed at Apollo and Endeavour Elementary Schools. It is for students who test academically and cognitively at exceptionally advanced levels in the areas of reading, math and creativity, as well as verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative abilities. Selected students will participate in accelerated and/or advanced instruction in all core subject areas. Families must provide transportation to the school servicing their attendance area.

SAGE—is a program offered at each of our elementary schools. It is for students who test academically and cognitively at exceptionally advanced levels in either the area of reading and verbal abilities or the area of math, quantitative and nonverbal abilities and creativity. Selected students will be served with either a math or reading focus. SAGE students are served through pull-out, differentiated instruction in their classrooms and special enrichment projects.

Entrance procedures for MERLIN and SAGE comply with requirements for Highly Capable Programs in Washington State. Full details of the procedures are published on the Issaquah School District website at http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/academics/Programs/gifted/Default.aspx

Testing for students includes: the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) form 7, level 9, in verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative, the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT), and the Iowa Achievement Test, form E, level 8, in math and reading. This year, the CogAT and the TTCT will be administered in January 2020. The Iowa Achievement Test will be administered in March 2020. Testing is conducted at the neighborhood school during the school day. Make-ups cannot be accommodated outside of the testing window. Please note the following regarding student testing:

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.
All Second Grade Students are Tested
The Issaquah School District tests ALL second grade students for the Highly Capable Program so there is no need for individuals to refer a student.

If you do not want your student tested for the Highly Capable Program (HCP), 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 back to your neighborhood school office by December 20th for the CogAT and TTCT and by February 21st for the IOWA.

Students living within Issaquah School District’s boundaries but attending private or home-based schools may attend testing. Contact the neighborhood school for more information.

Results from outside testing agencies will not be accepted for entry into the Highly Capable Program.

The Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee (MDSC) will review all students’ assessment results to determine possible selection for the Highly Capable Program. Following the MDSC meeting in May, a letter with your student’s score report, which includes Iowa, CogAT, and TTCT scores, will be mailed home in June.

The letter will also include notification of your student’s eligibility status for admission into the Highly Capable Program (HCP) for the 2020-2021 school year. Qualifying students will receive an invitation to participate in the HCP in this same mailing. Letters will arrive via US mail.

If Your Student is Selected for MERLIN
Students who live in the following attendance areas: Apollo, Briarwood, Clark, Cougar Ridge, Grand Ridge, Issaquah Valley, Maple Hills, Newcastle, and Sunset will attend Apollo. Students who live in the following attendance areas: Cascade Ridge, Challenger, Creekside, Discovery, Endeavour, and Sunny Hills will attend Endeavour.

Please note: Attendance areas for the MERLIN program could change based on patterns of enrollment.

Parents are responsible for providing transportation of MERLIN students to the school servicing their attendance area.

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

Sincerely,

Page Perey
Director of Elementary Special Programs

Susan Mundell
Executive Director of Elementary Education
Highly Capable 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 Marianne Dikran at 425-837-7120.

The deadline for submission of appeals is (10) ten business days from the date of notification of score results.

The decision of the Appeal Review Team is final.

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 Multi-disciplinary 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.