

Highly Capable Program & Services

Enumclaw School District

(Approved by ESD School Board on August 17, 2015)

The Enumclaw School District offers a continuum of services for highly capable students K-12. (Policy 2190).

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. Highly Capable services are provided to students who are residents of the Enumclaw School District and have been identified as in need of services through the ESD referral process. Students who are highly capable may possess these learning characteristics (among others):" (WAC 392-170-035)

"Students who are highly capable may possess, but are not limited to, these learning characteristics:

1. Capacity to learn with unusual depth of understanding, to retain what has been learned, and to transfer learning to new situations;
2. Capacity and willingness to deal with increasing levels of abstraction and complexity earlier than their chronological peers;
3. Creative ability to make unusual connections among ideas and concepts;
4. Ability to learn quickly in their area(s) of intellectual strength; and
5. Capacity for intense concentration or focus." (WAC 392-170-036)

Highly Capable Program Objectives:

- Expansion of academic attainment and intellectual skills
- Stimulation of intellectual curiosity, independence and responsibility
- Development of a positive attitude toward self and others
- Development of originality and creativity

Highly Capable Identification Process

Every year, Enumclaw School District evaluates enrolled students for Highly Capable Program eligibility. Students who participate in this process may receive a Highly Capable qualification. From second through eighth grade, a Highly Capable qualification enables students to engage in advanced-level work in their area(s) of strength. In high school, all students (regardless of HiCap qualification status) may enroll in advanced courses.

Fall

Any child in grades 3-4, 6-7 can be referred during the Referral Window (Aug- Oct) for Highly Capable screening. Referred students will take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) at their current school during the regular school day. This assessment will be administered by a district designated staff member.

Highly Capable referral forms are available [HERE](#) and on the website the last week of August each year. If a child qualifies, Highly Capable Services will begin in January of the current school year.

Families, teachers and others may **refer students** in Kindergarten and first grade to be placed on a Holistic Learner watch list for potential highly capable characteristics. The K-1 referral process will consist of a data review using data we already collect. Parents/Guardians will be notified of placement on the Holistic Learner watch list. It is not a highly capable designation. We will screen all second grade students, including those on our holistic learner watch list during our universal screening process in second grade for formal highly capable services to begin in third grade. Holistic Learner Referral Forms are available [HERE](#)

Winter

Fifth Grade Screeners will take place in January. Parents/Guardians will be informed if their child qualifies for the remainder of the CogAT test. All test scores will be sent home once the process is complete. Test scores for all 5th grade students will be reviewed by the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee to determine eligibility for middle school. Families and administration will receive results regarding student eligibility in early spring.

Spring

Second Grade Screeners will take place in April. Parents/Guardians will be informed if their child qualifies for the remainder of the CogAT test. All test scores will be sent home once the process is complete. Test scores for all 2nd grade students will be reviewed by the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee to determine eligibility for elementary school. Families and administration will receive results regarding student eligibility in June.

Instructional Programs

“For highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to a basic education.”

☛☛ Holistic Learner Watchlist (K-2)

A **Holistic Learner** is a student who shows advanced thinking skills, creativity, or curiosity that may not yet be fully reflected in academic test scores. These students often demonstrate strong problem-solving abilities, deep interests, or unique ways of understanding the world around them. The **Holistic Learner Watchlist** helps teachers recognize and nurture these emerging strengths by providing differentiated instruction as needed that **support both academic growth and social-emotional development**.

☛ Holistic Learner Program (K—2)

The **Holistic Learner Program** is designed to recognize and support students in grades K—2 who demonstrate advanced thinking skills, creativity, curiosity, or problem-solving abilities. While not part of our formal Highly Capable (HiCap) services, this program provides **early enrichment opportunities** for students who show potential for future HiCap identification.

Our focus is on nurturing the *whole child*—academically, socially, and emotionally. Teachers and support staff collaborate to provide:

- **Academic enrichment and extensions** that deepen learning in literacy, math, and STEAM.
- **Social and emotional learning (SEL)** support that builds confidence, perseverance, and self-awareness.
- **Flexible grouping and differentiated instruction** within the classroom to challenge students appropriately.
- **Observation and ongoing assessment** to ensure that students' evolving needs are recognized and met.

The goal of the Holistic Learner Program is to foster a love of learning, encourage curiosity, and develop the foundational skills and habits that prepare students for future Highly Capable opportunities beginning in third grade.

All second graders, including those on the Holistic Learner Watchlist, participate in **universal screening** for eligibility in the formal Highly Capable Program beginning in third grade.

Highly Capable Elementary Program (Grades 3—5)

The **Highly Capable Program** serves students in grades 3—5 who demonstrate advanced academic and cognitive abilities, creative problem-solving, and strong motivation to learn. Our goal is to ensure that each student is both **challenged and supported**—academically, socially, and emotionally.

Students in the Highly Capable Program are placed in classrooms with other identified students, where instruction is differentiated as needed to provide:

- **Academic Enrichment and Extension** — Opportunities to explore topics in greater depth and complexity, promoting critical and creative thinking.
- **Flexible Grouping with Like-Minded Peers** — Collaboration with other highly capable learners to encourage intellectual challenge and social connection.
- **Curriculum Acceleration** — Access to advanced materials, independent projects, and pacing aligned with student readiness.
- **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** — Lessons and discussions that support self-awareness, resilience, collaboration, and empathy.
- **Support for Overexcitabilities** — Guidance in managing perfectionism, intensities, and sensitivities common among gifted learners, helping students develop balance, confidence, and well-being.

The program's overall purpose is to **nurture each student's strengths**, foster a sense of belonging, and cultivate lifelong learning habits that prepare them for success both in and beyond the classroom.

All fifth graders who have not been tested while in third or fourth grade will participate in **universal screening** for eligibility in the Highly Capable Middle School Program beginning in sixth grade.

Highly Capable Middle School Program (Grades 6—8)

The **Middle School Highly Capable Program** is designed to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of advanced learners as they transition into adolescence. Identified students in grades 6—8 are provided with a variety of opportunities to learn, grow, and connect with like-minded peers.

Students are **served through differentiated placement and programming**, which may include:

- **Advanced Math Placement** — Qualification for accelerated math pathways that align with readiness and mastery, preparing students for higher-level coursework.
- **HiCap Wolf Den (Enumclaw Middle School) and Focus (Thunder Mountain Middle School)** — Enrichment experiences, collaborative projects, and targeted support designed to meet both cognitive and social-emotional needs.
- **Leveled and Elective Classes** — Placement in classes that match students' academic readiness and areas of interest, providing challenge and depth of learning.
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Opportunities** — Exploratory courses that allow students to connect classroom learning to real-world applications.
- **Sports, Clubs, and Extracurricular Activities** — A wide range of opportunities for leadership, creativity, and belonging beyond the classroom.
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)** — Focused support for the unique characteristics of highly capable learners, including managing perfectionism, intensities, and peer relationships.

The goal of the program is to ensure that each student is **appropriately challenged academically, supported socially and emotionally, and connected to a community that values curiosity, creativity, and growth.**

Highly Capable High School Program (Grades 9—12)

The **High School Highly Capable Program** supports identified students through a range of academic pathways, enrichment experiences, and social-emotional learning opportunities designed to foster independence, creativity, and leadership.

Students are **served through placement and access to advanced coursework and enrichment**, including:

- **Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit, and Running Start Courses** — Providing rigorous academic challenge and the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school.
- **Specialized Electives and Career & Technical Education (CTE) Pathways** — Offering hands-on, real-world learning that connects to students' areas of strength and future goals.
- **Leadership, Clubs, and Athletics** — Encouraging collaboration, responsibility, and a strong sense of belonging within the school community.

- **Social-Emotional Learning and Mentorship** — Supporting students in managing academic intensity, perfectionism, and personal growth while fostering resilience and self-awareness.

The goal of the high school program is to ensure that each student is **challenged academically**, **supported emotionally**, and **empowered to explore their passions** while preparing for success in postsecondary education and beyond.

Identification

The identification of highly capable students is a multi-step process that takes in notification, referral, screening, parent permissions, assessment, selection, and the procedures necessary to appeal a selection decision and exit a student.

Notification

- All 2nd and 5th grade students will be screened for potential qualification of Highly Capable Services; as well as to determine if Highly Capable Services are still needed. This information will be communicated to all families through School/ Principal Newsletters.

Nomination referrals

- Referral period is open from September- October, and again in April-May; if not in a screening period.
- Parents, teachers, students, and/or community members are eligible to nominate a student for Highly Capable Program consideration using the district's nomination form. The form is located on the district website under Highly Capable Program (HCP).

Parental permission

- Written permission from a nominee's parent or legal guardian is required before any services begin.

Screening:

- All 5th Grade students will be screened in the Winter using the CogAT 7 screener to determine potential eligibility for Middle School Highly Capable Program or need for continued Highly Capable Services.
- All 2nd Grade students will be screened in the Spring using the CogAT 7 screener to determine potential eligibility for the Elementary Highly Capable Program.

Assessment:

- The use of multiple objective criteria from a variety of sources will be considered to identify each nominee's unique needs and capabilities.
- The student assessment profile consists of multiple objective criteria, both qualitative and quantitative and formal and informal, such as, but not limited to, CogAT Testing,

Star Reading and Math, AimsWeb Reading and Math, SBA scores, report card, classroom work samples, and parent and teacher observation checklists.

- Referred students with CogAT scores of 93th percentile or higher and/or additional evidence that indicate the student is performing one or more grade levels above will be considered for services.

Selection:

- As per (WAC 392-170-070), a multidisciplinary selection committee will review all data for each nominated student. The selection committee consists of a teacher, administrator, and/or additional professionals who may provide content. The selection committee will evaluate the individual student assessment profile and make a decision on selections based on a preponderance of evidence that the student is among the most highly capable, a clear need for highly capable services, and would benefit the most from inclusion in the district's continuum of services.
- Parents will be notified regarding evaluation results through written communication. Parents will receive an explanation of identification procedures, an explanation of the appeal process, and procedures for exiting the highly capable program.
- Before services begin, written consent for services to identified students must be obtained.
- All 5th grade students will participate in the CogAT screener. The 5th Grade Screening process will evaluate/ reevaluate student need for qualifying areas, continuing services or exiting the program for middle school.

Process for Appeal

The Enumclaw School District in compliance with the Washington State rules for Highly Capable Programs (WAC 392-170-047) has an appeals process. If there is a disagreement with selection decision, an Appeal form needs to be completed. It can be found on the district website under School Board Policies 2190F.

The appeal must be based on one of the following conditions:

1. A condition or circumstance believed to have caused a misinterpretation of the testing results (for example, an incorrect birthday or grade level).
2. An extraordinary circumstance occurred during the testing period that may negatively affect the test validity (such as death of a family member or physical ailment).
3. The suspicion of error in the administration of the assessment.
4. A misapplication or miscalculation of the score by the selection committee.

Exit Process

The exit process may be initiated for students who no longer demonstrate a need for HCP services.

- A written request may be made by a teacher or program administration for placement discontinuation.
- The selection committee will convene a meeting to review the student's profile to determine if the student qualifies for program services based on current assessment data and selection criteria.
- A request for additional evidence of student capabilities or willingness to participate in the program may be made.
- The parent will be notified in writing of the committee's decision to either continue services, place the child on probationary status, or to exit the child from the highly capable program.
- A parent or guardian may request the student be withdrawn from the program at any time. A meeting to discuss the request with the HCP Coordinator will be scheduled. Afterwards, if the parent desires to withdraw the student from the program, the student will be exited immediately.

Links:

NewsLetter

[HiCap News Fall 2022](#)

[HiCap News Winter 2023](#)

[HiCap News Spring 2023](#)

[HiCap News Fall 2023](#)

[Parent Night Spring 2023](#)

[Parent Night Fall 2023](#)

[HiCap Program Overview 2023](#)

[HiCap Newsletter Spring 2025](#)

