



## Welcome to Module 1: An Overview of Identification Process and Practices

How do we identify students for highly capable programs and services? This has been the most confusing and controversial aspect of gifted education programming. Practitioners have long struggled with how to do it right, and spend an inordinate amount of time on the task. Well-intentioned and dedicated school personnel ask questions such as “Who are the highly capable students,” “Are teachers good judges of students’ talents,” “Do we retest students every year for identification purposes,” and “What is the best test to use when identifying students?” These questions reflect assumptions that there is a correct way to identify students for gifted services. In reality, identifying students is not precise. We must consider how we ensure equity and access to ALL students who might benefit from highly capable services.

This module explores the process and procedures of identification of students who are highly capable based on Washington Administrative Code 392-170, with a discussion about complex decisions educators must make when developing comprehensive identification plans that match student learning needs in Grades K-12.

## Module Overview

This module explains the identification process of highly capable students in the State of Washington. It also introduces a paradigm shift in thinking to match the requirements of the new law. Participants will explore the complexity of the decisions educators must make when developing comprehensive identification plans that match student learning needs K-12.

Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to critically analyze their identification plans, policies and procedures to make changes if necessary to align with best practices in the field of gifted education, and with Washington Administrative codes to assure access and equity to highly capable services.



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## State of the State – Highly Capable

The state of Washington is on the cutting edge of gifted education as it recognizes that “for highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction **is access to a basic education,**” (RCW 28A.185.020). This requires schools, teachers, and districts to identify and serve the advanced learning needs of these students through a variety of services. Rather than identifying students as highly capable for one specific program, the law requires appropriate services that take into account students’ unique needs and capabilities.



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The state of Washington is on the cutting edge of gifted education as it recognizes that “for highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to a basic education” (RCW 28A.185.020). There are multiple definitions of highly capable, from intellectual to academic to artistic. The research literature strongly supports using multiple criteria to identify highly capable students, and therefore, the legislature does not intend to prescribe a single method. School districts may access basic education funds, in addition to highly capable categorical funds, to provide appropriate highly capable student programs (WAC 392-170-012). This additional allocation is based on 2.314 percent of each school district's population and authorizes school districts to identify through the use of multiple, objective criteria those students most highly capable and eligible to receive accelerated learning and enhanced instruction in the program offered by the district. Access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction through the program for highly capable students does not constitute an individual entitlement for any particular student.

## Alignment with the National Association of Gifted Child

This module aligns with the following NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards - Standard 2: Assessment

1. Educators establish comprehensive, cohesive, and ongoing procedures for identifying and serving students with gifts and talents. These provisions include informed consent, committee review, student retention, student reassessment, student exiting, and appeals procedures for both entry and exit from gifted program services.
2. Educators select and use multiple assessments that measure diverse abilities, talents, and strengths that are based on current theories, models, and research.
3. Assessments provide qualitative and quantitative information from a variety of sources, including off-level testing, are nonbiased and equitable, and are technically adequate for the purpose.
4. Educators have knowledge of student exceptionalities and collect assessment data while adjusting curriculum and instruction to learn about each student's developmental level and aptitude for learning.

Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to critically analyze their identification plans, policies and procedures to make changes if necessary to align with best practices in the field of gifted education, and with Washington Administrative codes to assure access and equity to highly capable services.



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This module aligns with the following NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards in Gifted Education-Standard 2-Assessment (NAGC, 2010).

1. Educators establish comprehensive, cohesive, and ongoing procedures for identifying and serving students with gifts and talents. These provisions include informed consent, committee review, student retention, student reassessment, student exiting, and appeals procedures for both entry and exit from gifted program services.
2. Educators select and use multiple assessments that measure diverse abilities, talents, and strengths that are based on current theories, models, and research.
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4. Educators have knowledge of student exceptionalities and collect assessment data while adjusting curriculum and instruction to learn about each student's developmental level and aptitude for learning.

### References:

National Association for Gifted Children. (2010). *Pre-K-Grade 12 gifted programming*

*standards*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/national-standards-gifted-and-talented-education/pre-k-grade-12>

Supplementary funds provided by the state for the program for highly capable students under RCW [28A.150.260 shall be categorical funding to provide services to highly capable students as determined by a school district under RCW 28A.185.030.](#)

## Module Objectives

1. Explore the purpose of identification practices.
2. Examine Washington's Administrative Codes to become knowledgeable about components pertaining to the identification process.
3. Understand the definition of highly capable students in the state of Washington and the implications of that definition on highly capable services.
4. Shift the paradigm from identifying giftedness to identifying learning needs.
5. Use the identification process to gather evidence of learning needs that require a variety of highly capable services.
6. Articulate the relationship between identification plans and access to highly capable programs.
7. Analyze your own district's identification process to align with both the NAGC Standards and the Washington Administrative Codes.



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This module has seven components including the opportunity for participants to:

1. Explore the purpose of identification practices.
2. Recognize what guidance the Washington Administrative Code offers on the identification process.
3. Understand the definition of highly capable students in the state of Washington and the implications of that definition on highly capable services.
4. Shift the paradigm from identifying giftedness to identifying learning needs.
5. Use the identification process to gather evidence of learning needs that require a variety of services.
6. Articulate the relationship between identification plans and access to highly capable programs.
7. Analyze your own district's identification process to align with both the NAGC Standards and the Washington Administrative Codes.

## Purpose of Identification

1. Look for students who need enhanced and advanced learning experiences responsive to their learning profiles;
2. Consider multiple ways to provide enhanced and advanced learning services that align to the academic needs of those students identified; and
3. Focus on creating classrooms that challenge ALL students, including those who demonstrate or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels.



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We'll start this module with the purpose of identifying highly capable students. The main reason we identify children as highly capable is to appropriately match educational services to their learning profiles and behaviors. The differences these students may exhibit are then used to create differentiated educational services to address their distinct learning profile. Identifying highly capable students helps districts to recognize those who require enhanced or accelerated services to promote their continuous growth. The identification process and procedures outlined by a school district ultimately impact all aspects of highly capable services since these students, referred to as "highly capable," are quite diverse in their characteristics, learning profiles, and behaviors. As we move through the module, we want you to keep three big ideas in mind:

- The purpose of the identification process is to look for children who require enhanced and advanced learning experiences that are responsive to their learning profiles.
- There are multiple ways to provide enhanced and advanced learning, and the law requires a variety of services be offered that align to the learning needs of these students.
- Teachers should focus on creating classrooms that challenge ALL students, including those who demonstrate or show potential for performance at

significantly advanced academic levels.



An important question for school districts is, how will they identify and serve highly capable students through a variety of services. Definitions provide the basis for shared understanding how highly capable students will be identified and served, while also facilitating decision making about when, where, and how these services are offered, why they will be offered, and what type of resource allocations are necessary to ensure these students' continuous growth.

There is no single, universally accepted definition of giftedness, but a range of conceptions and definitions. According to Clarenbach & Echert, "definitions of giftedness tend to be either theoretical or practical in their construction". Definitions can be referred to as conceptual, while others are more operational. Moon has explained these differences as follows:

Conceptual definitions are based on theories of giftedness and are incorporated into districts' mission statements and define the construct of giftedness in the abstract. Operational definitions provide specific, concrete guidance on how a conception of giftedness will be assessed and identified in a particular context for a specific purpose.

Definitions are often derived from varying conceptions of giftedness, crafted from federal and state definitions, and provided by national organizations. Over time, these definitions have been influenced by the “evolution of ideas in the field of psychology, particularly psychometrics; by historical events; and by the politics and economics of given eras” according to Callahan & Hertberg-Davis. The definition selected by a school district should provide guidance in making other decisions, such as, how to identify students while also taking into consideration the research on what are fair and equitable identification practices when identifying culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students for highly capable program services.

Defining “highly capable” is an important and complicated matter for many reasons, but must be discussed among all district personnel in order to create shared philosophies about how the school defines these students. Once a district has determined how to identify, it must outline the most effective and defensible process for finding those students. Identification processes and the assessment tools used in these processes should be closely aligned with the definition of highly capable and be reflective of best practices in measurement and assessment.

### **References:**

- Clarenbach, J., & Eckert, R. (2013). Policy-related definitions of giftedness: A call for change. In C. M. Callahan & H. L. Hertberg-Davis (Eds.), *Fundamentals of gifted education: Considering multiple perspectives* (pp. 26-35). New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Moon, S. M. (2006). Developing a definition of giftedness. In J. H. Purcell & R. D. Eckert, (Eds.), *Designing services and programs for high-ability learners: A guidebook for gifted education*. (pp. 23-31). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

## Stop and Pause: Read

Definitions of giftedness and the identification practices that evolve from these definitions are subject of great debate. Select and read the articles posted on our website that address some of these varying conceptions of giftedness, which ultimately influence our definitions and impact our decisions regarding who gets access to highly capable services.

You might consider assigning these articles to various group members on your team to explore the following:

1. How do the various authors discuss giftedness? What are the implications of these perspectives on the definition, identification process and procedures, and types of services a district might offer?
2. How do these ideas challenge your own beliefs or how you define highly capable students in your district?



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### Article References:

Callahan, C. M. (2001). Beyond the gifted stereotype. *Educational Leadership*, 59(2), 42-46.

Olszewski-Kubilius, P., & Clarenbach, J. (2012). *Unlocking emergent talent: Supporting high achievement of low-income high-ability students*. Washington, DC: National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

Renzulli, J. S. (1978). What makes giftedness? Reexamining a definition. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 60(3), 180-184, 261. (Retrieved from reprint version published in Kappan Digital Education, 2011, <https://gseuphsdlibrary.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/what-makes-giftedness.pdf>)

Sternberg, R. J. (1999). Successful intelligence: Finding a balance. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 3(11), 436-442.

Subotnik, R. F., Olszewski-Kubilius, P., & Worrell, F. C. (2011). Rethinking giftedness

and gifted education: A proposed direction forward based on psychological science.  
*Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 12(1), 3-54.

## WAC 392-170-035

### Washington State-Definition of Students Who Are Highly Capable

Highly capable students are students who **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 not only in the general populace, but are present within all protected classes according to chapters **28A.640 and 28A.642 RCW.**



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Washington state provides school districts with a definition of highly capable students, which includes both students **who perform or show potential** for performance at significantly advanced academic levels. Inherent in the definition, are the areas in which students may show their strengths: intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, and creative productivities. Notice the comparison of these students are with others of their age, experience, or environments. This does suggest that the use of local norms may be useful when comparing students with their peer group, as well as to investigate the potential of students in schools where talent has not been traditionally recognized, which is further explored in Module 3, *Challenges and Issues in Address Diversity*. Additionally, this definition aligns to the research that recognizes highly capable students may be advanced in one more more academic domains. In practical terms, the definition should help to shape a district program's goals and curriculum, and will guide the decisions about which students will be identified for highly capable services.

Your district's definition of highly capable must align to state law, WAC 392-170-035, and clarify who meets the criteria for most highly capable district-wide. If your district's definition of most highly capable differs from the WAC 392-170-035 or WAC 392-170-036 (referenced on the next slide), make sure to incorporate all components

from both WACs.

## WAC 392-170-036

### Learning Characteristics

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 and/or focus**.



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In Washington, highly capable students are also defined by their learning characteristics. These characteristics can often be seen and observed in classrooms; but sometimes, they are not obvious, nor fully developed. Therefore, teachers must understand that when they are looking for these characteristics, they have to create contexts for these behaviors to be displayed or developed.

It is also important to recognize that there is not just one list of characteristics that describe all gifted and talented learners due to the “absolute diversity of this heterogeneous, varied, and unique group” (Reis, Sullivan, & Renzulli, 2015, p. 69). What these researchers recommend is to be aware that these traits vary according to gender, sociocultural characteristics, having a hidden or overt disability, age, and whether a child is achieving or underachieving. They also state, that “misconception persists that somehow the right combination of traits can be found that prove the existence of giftedness” (p. 93). Perhaps what should be considered about these learning characteristics is that they are to be developed and can be learned through the types of services that support the academic profiles of students who are identified as highly capable. While many highly capable students may demonstrate these characteristics, it’s also important to realize that not all students have had access to high quality educational experiences that have helped to shape these

characteristics or behaviors.

**References:**

Reis, S. M., Sullivan, E. E., & Renzulli, S. J. (2015). Characteristics of gifted learners: Varied, diverse, and complex. In F. A. Karnes & S. M. Bean., (Eds.), *Methods and materials for teaching the gifted (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*, (pp. 69-103). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

## WAC 392-170-07

### Multidisciplinary Selection Committee

The multidisciplinary selection committee for the final selection of the most highly capable students for participation in the district's program for highly capable students shall consist of the following professionals:

1. A **special teacher**: Provided, that if a special teacher is not available, a **classroom teacher shall be appointed**;
2. A psychologist or other qualified practitioner with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results;
3. A certificated coordinator/administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's program for highly capable students; and
4. Such additional professionals, if any, the district deems desirable.



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Identification is an ongoing process with the goal of ensuring that students who require enhanced or accelerated learning experiences receive services that are matched to their specific learning needs.

Washington State requires the establishment of a Multidisciplinary Selection Committee for the final selection of the most highly capable students for participation in the district program for highly capable students. Some of the major responsibilities of the identification team are to create an identification plan that articulates the procedures for referring, screening, assessing, and identifying students for highly capable services. This committee includes:

1. A **special teacher**: Provided, that if a special teacher is not available, a **classroom teacher shall be appointed**;
2. A **psychologist or other qualified practitioner** with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results;
3. A **certificated coordinator/administrator** with responsibility for the supervision of the district's program for highly capable students; and
4. Such **additional professionals**, if any, the district deems desirable.

It is also advisable that district personnel in charge of the highly capable program form a committee to collaborate in designing the identification procedures and

exploring the types of services that the school district will provide to students identified in Grades K-12 (see *Module 4: Developing an Array of Services for Highly Capable Students*).

This committee might be made up of members from the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee and include representatives from specific grade levels, coordinators or directors of highly capable program services, administrators, and school counselors who might assist in developing and implementing a professional development plan for educators. As outlined in NAGC's Pre K-Grade 12 Programming Standards (2010), high quality programs for highly capable students require that professional development in gifted education should help all educators to recognize the characteristics of giftedness in diverse populations, understand the school or district referral and identification process, and possess an array of high quality research-based differentiation strategies that challenge students. Additionally, services for identified students are enhanced by guidance and counseling professionals with knowledge about the social and emotional needs of these students. This team could serve to identify the professional development needs of their staff and plan ways to provide this support.

#### **References:**

National Association for Gifted Children. (2010). *Pre-K-Grade 12 gifted programming standards*. Washington, DC: Author.  
<http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/national-standards-gifted-and-talented-education/pre-k-grade-12>

## Special Teacher

A special teacher is a teacher who has **training, experience, advanced skills, and knowledge in the education of highly capable students**. Areas of competence should include knowledge of the following: **Identification procedures, academic, social and emotional characteristics, program design and delivery, instructional practices, student assessment, and program evaluation.**



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Washington state has defined a special teacher as one who has training, expertise, advanced skills, and knowledge in the education of highly capable students. If such a teacher does not exist, then a classroom teacher shall be appointed.

## Activity 1: Reflection-Becoming More Aware of the NAGC Pre-K- Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards

It is not uncommon to hear the question asked, “What are the quality indicators for comprehensive programming for highly capable students?” Download the following NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards (2010) and have your team consider this broad question while examining what these standards recommend.

(Access the Gifted Programming Standards under the Resource section in Module 1 on our website.) Use these questions to guide your thinking:

1. In examining the standards, how do your school district’s standards compare?
2. In assessing your implementation of these standards, what are your strengths? Areas for improvement?
3. Which student outcomes are currently addressed through the services you provide?
4. What action plans might you consider taking?



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Standards are important to professional fields and provide benefits to all educators, according to Johnsen. It is not uncommon to hear the question asked, “What are the quality indicators for comprehensive programming for highly capable students?” Districts may find it helpful to download the *2010 NAGC Pre-K-12 Gifted Programming Standards* to assist them in thinking about this question and examining what standards are in place in their schools, and which standards still need to be addressed.

The NAGC standards were developed to serve as indicators of progress and can be used to document gaps in program services, evaluate a program’s effectiveness, and also plan and develop district action plans. These standards focus on student outcomes, research-based instructional practices, standards that emphasize diversity, and encourage stronger relations between gifted education, general education, and special education according to Johnsen. A committee or team who is working to improve their identification process and procedures, and working to include the variety of services necessary to support highly capable students, might find it interesting to consider how the standards can be used to provide guidance for the development of their programs and to identify areas for enhancing the professional learning of all educators.

**References:**

Johnsen, S. K. (2015). Gifted education programming standards. In F. A. Karnes & S. M. Bean (Eds.), *Methods and materials for teaching the gifted (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*, (pp. 3-41). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

National Association for Gifted Children. (2010). Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards.: A blueprint for quality gifted education programs. Retrieved from: <http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/standards/K-12%20standards%20booklet.pdf>

## Activity 2: Reflection-Becoming More Aware of the Snapshot Survey of Gifted Programming Effectiveness Factors

*The Snapshot Survey of Gifted Programming Effectiveness Factors* (Lord & Cotabish, 2010) is a tool educators can use to (a) assess the extent to which their programs employ best practices as identified by national standards, (b) rate the extent to which changes in current practices on specific standards would likely improve student outcomes, and (c) determine the amount of effort it would take to significantly modify their practices and/or develop new initiatives targeting specific evidenced-based practices.

Locate the *Snapshot Survey* in the Resources section of Module 1 and consider the following:

1. What have you found to be your general program strengths and areas for improvement?
2. What new directions or new components do you need to consider adding?



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Another useful tool, *The Snapshot Survey of Gifted Programming Effectiveness Factors* by Lord & Cotabish is a tool educators can use to assess the extent to which their programs employ best practices as identified by national standards, rate the extent to which changes in current practices on specific standards would likely improve student outcomes, and determine the amount of effort it would take to significantly modify their practices and/or develop new initiatives targeting specific evidenced-based practices. School districts may find it helpful to consider policy implications of any practices they target in an action plan.

For some school districts, who are in the earlier stages of planning their highly capable programs, these standards can help them establish and monitor the progress of implementing specific evidence-based practices.

### References:

Lord, E. W., & Cotabish, A. (2010, November). *Using the national gifted teacher preparation standards and NAGC program standards to inform practice: Snapshot survey of gifted programming effectiveness factors*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for Gifted Children, Atlanta,

GA. Retrieved from:

<http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/standards/Snapshot%20Survey%20for%20K-12%20standards.pdf>

### **Resources:**

The guide listed below is designed for teachers and gifted education coordinators to reflect on and improve their teaching practices and gifted education programs through the lens of student outcomes enumerated in the NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards. This might be a useful tool for your district to purchase to guide your highly capable program decisions.

National Association for Gifted Children. (2015). *Self-assess your P-12 practice or program using the NAGC Gifted Programming Standards*. Washington, DC: NAGC.

## References

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Images: <https://www.parentmap.com/article/the-parent-coach-the-importance-of-identifying-giftedness>

Research:



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## Developing Identification Processes and Procedures That Ensure Equal Access

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1. Annual Notification
2. Referral
3. Screening (Optional)
4. Parent Permissions
5. Assessment
6. Selection
7. Notification
8. Appeals
9. Exit Policies



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The identification of highly capable students is an ongoing, multi-step process that includes the following components: notification, referral, screening (which is optional), parent permissions, assessment, selection, and the procedures necessary to appeal a selection decision and exit a student from highly capable services.

## The Identification Process Overview

- The identification process is open to all students.
- This process should occur each year.
- New and transfer students should be identified within three months of their enrollment.
- Identification is a continuous process, not a one-time event.
- The identification process must be equitable, open to all students and families regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or any support services the student receives.
- Districts must review their process to ensure selection reflects the demographics of the area they serve.



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This identification process is open to ALL students enrolled in the district and should occur at every grade level, every year. It should also include a process for students not enrolled in the district during the previous year's identification cycle. These students must be identified within the first three months of their enrollment, with services delivered during this new or transfer year. Identification should be viewed as an ongoing, continuous process rather than as a one-time event. This is to ensure that students who demonstrate a need for services offered by the highly capable program can be identified and served in a timely manner.

The district's identification process must apply equitably to all enrolled students and families from every racial, ethnic, and socio-economic population present in the public school population they serve. Districts must review identification procedures to make sure student selection reflects the demographics of the area they serve.

## **WAC 392-170-042**

### **Annual Notification**

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Annual public notification of parents and students shall be made before any major identification activity. The notice shall be published or announced in multiple ways in appropriate languages to each community in school and district publications or other media, with circulation adequate to notify parents and students throughout the district.



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Making the identification process and procedure highly visible and transparent ensures better access and equity for all families in our communities. Washington State requires that annual public notification to parents and students shall be made before any major identification activity. This notification must be published in multiple school and district publications or other media, in appropriate languages to each community, and with circulation adequate to notify parents, students, and the community about these identification activities.

Such an annual notice might include the following:

- The purpose of the identification activities and the steps to the identification process;
- A description of how to request that the district initiate screening or assessment activities for a child;
- The purpose, time and location of any screening or assessment activities to be held in the district;
- A description of highly capable services available and the needs of children served by these services; and
- An explanation of the protection of the confidentiality of information obtained regarding a specific child.

## WAC 392-170-045

### Referral Process

- Each school district shall establish written procedures for the referral of students to participate in programs for highly capable students. Such procedures shall permit referrals based on data or evidence from teachers, other staff, parents, students, and members of the community.
- A district's referral procedure for students who are highly capable may include screening procedures to eliminate students who, based on clear, current evidence, do not qualify for eligibility under WAC [392-170-055](#).



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The purpose of the referral process is to ensure that all students who have potential in the areas served by the district are referred. Referrals are solicited from multiple sources: teachers, school staff, parents, students, and members of the community. A variety of referrers ensures that all students have access, particularly those students with disabilities, students who are culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse, or who are from rurally isolated areas. School districts must establish written referral procedures and make them available as part of their notification of identification activities.

## Research on the Referral Process

- Many issues affect the referral process and create under-representation of special populations.
  - Districts will want to address these issues through professional development
- Teachers, without proper training, may nominate children based on **their own** perceptions of giftedness.
- Research has found that, in some cases, educators are less likely to nominate students who are economically disadvantaged or English-language learners.
- These findings demonstrate the importance of thoroughly training educators prior to the referral stage.



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Research reveals there are many issues that affect the referral process, and may create under-representation of special populations. Districts will want to consider addressing this under-representation through professional development. Some of these issues are due to how teachers nominate children based on their own conceptions of giftedness; perceptions that these students are strong in all academic areas, from higher socio-economic status groups, are verbal, or are well mannered. These are just a few perceptions that affect the referral process. In some cases, educators are less likely to nominate those who are economically disadvantaged or English-language learners. These findings suggest the importance of thoroughly training educators about students who may demonstrate or show potential for highly capable services prior to the referral stage. Gear found that without training, teachers were not nominating students with high potential; they were merely selecting well-behaved students with good grades. After a brief training program, teacher nomination effectiveness more than doubled.

It is also important to notice that a district's referral procedure for students who are highly capable **may** include screening procedures to eliminate students who, based on clear, current evidence, do not qualify for eligibility. If a school district is going to have a screening procedure built into their identification process, efforts should be

made to build a portfolio or a collection of a preponderance of evidence for why a student should or should not move forward to the assessment stage of the identification process. Just as one piece of evidence should not identify students for highly capable services, one piece of evidence should not exclude students from further testing.

## References:

- Gear, G.H. (1978). Effects of training on teachers' accuracy in the identification of gifted children. *The Gifted Child Quarterly*, 22, 90-97.
- Guskin, S. L., Peng, C. J., & Simon, M. (1992). Do teachers react to "Multiple Intelligences"? Effect of teachers' stereotypes on judgments and expectancies for students with diverse patterns of giftedness/talent. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 36, 32-37.
- Hunsaker, S. L. (1994). Creativity as a characteristic of giftedness: Teachers see it, then they don't. *Roeper Review*, 17, 11-15.
- Hunsaker, S. L., Finley, V. S., & Frank, E. L. (1997). An analysis of teacher nomination and student performance in gifted programs. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 41, 19-24.
- Neumeister, K. L., Adams, C. M., Pierce, R. L., Cassady, J. C., & Dixon, F. A. (2007). Fourth-grade teachers' perceptions of giftedness: Implications for identifying and serving diverse gifted students. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 30, 479-499.
- Peterson, J. S., & Margolin, R. (1997). Naming gifted children: An example of unintended "reproduction". *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 21, 82-101.
- Plata, M., & Masten, W. (1998). Teacher ratings of Hispanic and Anglo students on a behavior rating scale. *Roeper Review*, 21, 139-144.
- Schack, G. A., & Starko, A. J. (1990). Identification of gifted students: An analysis of criteria preferred by preservice teachers, classroom teachers, and teachers of the gifted. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 13, 346-363.

## Universal Screening in Washington

Universal screening means the systematic assessment of all students within a grade level for identifying exceptional ability or potential, especially in underrepresented population. Fair and reliable measurement tools appropriate to diverse populations should be selected.

### Screen Students for Eligibility

<http://bit.ly/2dkkoee>



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Washington State **does not require** school districts to use a universal screener in its identification process, but there are three WACs that work together to address the option of using a screening procedure and the requirement for multiple objective criteria. If a district uses a screening procedure, it must integrate multiple and objective measures able to determine which students will not enter the highly capable program. Please explore the '**Screen Students for Eligibility**' section of a document -provided by Washington state, and listed on your slide for further clarification

(<http://www.k12.wa.us/HighlyCapable/pubdocs/IdentifyHighlyCapablePrintableBookmarks.PDF>).

**Reference and Resource: For those of you that wish to investigate the study mentioned, you can find it in the Resource section of this module.**

Card, D., & Giuliano, L. (2015). Can universal screening increase the representation of low income and minority students in gifted education? (Working Paper No. 21519). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w21519>

## Research on Universal Screening

1. Introduction of universal screening nearly doubled the number of low income, minority, and English language learning students identified.
2. The distribution of IQ scores for the students identified under universal screening was very similar to the distribution among those identified under the referral system.
3. Gifted students identified via universal screening benefited at least as much as those students who would have been identified from the referral system.
4. The change to universal screening led to a substantial equalization in gifted identification across schools in the district.



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A method called “universal screening” has been examined by researchers Card & Giuliano to find out whether the use of this assessment affects the demographic composition of students identified as gifted. By definition, universal screening means the systematic assessment of all students within a grade level for identifying exceptional ability or potential, especially in underrepresented population. Fair and reliable measurement tools appropriate to diverse populations should be selected.

This study compared gifted student demographic representation before and after universal screening was introduced and discovered the following:

1. Introduction of universal screening nearly doubled the number of low income, minority, and English language learning students identified as gifted.
2. The distribution of IQ scores for the students identified under universal screening was very similar to the distribution among those identified under the referral system—meaning identification standards were not compromised by the universal screening method.
3. Gifted students identified via universal screening benefited at least as much from participating in the gifted program as those students who would have been identified from the referral system.

4. Gifted students were more likely to come from schools in poorer neighborhoods that had relatively fewer students identified as gifted under the identification process that required referrals. The change to universal screening led to a substantial equalization in gifted identification across schools in the district.

There are some challenges with the use of universal screening; tests are expensive and it requires additional testing, which is not a part of the regular school testing schedule.

### Activity 3: Reflection-Examining Annual Notifications and Referral Process Forms

At this point, it might be helpful to examine the Highly Capable Program (HCP) Handbook to examine documents that have been collected and serve as examples of forms that could be used by School Districts in their implementation of the law regarding "Annual Notifications" and "Referral Forms." The handbook can be found in the Resource section of this module.

After examining these documents, consider the following:

1. When comparing your annual notifications and referral process communications with those in the handbook, what changes would you make in notifying families, educators, students, and community members about these procedures?
2. You also might run a search of other school districts in the state of Washington to explore how they communicate with members of their local and school community about these procedures. What have you found that might be useful to you?



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*The Highly Capable Program (HCP) Handbook* was produced and funded by the Robinson Center for Young Scholars at the University of Washington. It was created to support Washington school districts in the implementation of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC 392-170) that establishes policies and procedures for administration of programs for the education of K-12 highly capable students [WAC 392-170-010] as authorized by the Superintendent of Public Instruction [WAC 392-170-005]. The handbook is available as a Word document file that may be accessed and downloaded for individual district use at the following website, or located in the Resource section of this module.

\*It should be noted that the word *nomination* has been replaced with the word *referral* in state law, even though you will see reference to the nomination process in the handbook.

#### Reference and Resource:

Akin, C. A., Chung, R. U., & Hertzog, N. B. (Eds.). (2015). *Highly capable program*

*handbook*. University of Washington: Robinson Center for Young Scholars.  
Retrieved from: <https://robinsoncenter.uw.edu/2015/06/new-educators-highly-capable-program-handbook/>

## WAC 392-170-047

### Parent/Legal Guardian Permission

**Parental permission shall be obtained in writing before:**

- 1) Conducting assessment(s) to determine eligibility for participation in programs for highly capable students;
- 2) Placement in the district's highly capable program before any special services and programs are started for an identified highly capable student;

**Parental permission notice shall include:**

- a) A full explanation of the procedures for identification of a student for entrance into the highly capable program;
- b) An explanation of the appeal's process;
- c) An explanation of the procedures to exit a student from the program; and
- d) Information on the district's program and the options that will be available to identified students.



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Parent/Legal guardian permission must be obtained in writing before conducting any assessments that make a student eligible for participation in highly capable programs. Permissions must also be obtained before placement and services in the district's highly capable program are started for an identified student.

It is important to include on the permission notice:

- A full explanation of the procedures for identification of a student for entrance into the highly capable program.
- An explanation of the appeal's process, which is a clearly written procedure for appealing the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee's decision regarding a student's placement into a highly capable program. It is also required by law that this procedure be disseminated to the public.
- An explanation of the procedures to exit/re-enter a student from the program, which would include a series of steps about how this process is to take place and time frames that inform parents of this process. Exit and re-entry decisions are often based on the district's identification process, a request by parent/legal guardian, or a student who is no longer enrolled in the district.
- Information on the district's program and services that will be available to identified students.

## Activity 4: Reflection-Examining Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Forms

In the *Highly Capable Program (HCP) Handbook* examine documents that address the requirements mentioned in the **WAC 392-170-047** Parent/Legal Guardian Permission. You can examine the **Permission to Assess, Permission to Place, Not Eligible, Appeals, and Exit** forms that serve as guides to the writing of your documents. You can access the handbook at [this site](#) or from the Resource section of this module.

After examining these documents, consider the following:

1. When comparing the forms mentioned above with current practices you use in the school district, are there additions or improvements you would make to become better aligned with the state law?
2. Do your forms include other information that might be beneficial to school districts as they work on their procedures?



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*The Highly Capable Program (HCP) Handbook* was produced and funded by the Robinson Center for Young Scholars at the University of Washington. It was created to support Washington school districts in the implementation of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC 392-170) that establishes policies and procedures for administration of programs for the education of K-12 highly capable students [WAC 392-170-010] as authorized by the Superintendent of Public Instruction [WAC 392-170-005]. The handbook is available as a Word document file that may be accessed and downloaded for individual district use at the following website or located in the Resource section of this module.

### Reference and Resource:

Akin, C. A., Chung, R. U., & Hertzog, N. B. (Eds.). (2015). *Highly capable program handbook*. University of Washington: Robinson Center for Young Scholars.

## Module 1 – Part 4

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- Assessment Process
- Nondiscrimination in the Use of Texts
- Selection Process
- Actions of the Multidisciplinary Committee
- Taken Action Steps & Prompts



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Welcome to the final video of module 1. In this video we'll be reviewing the Assessment Process, Nondiscrimination in the use of texts, Selection Process, and Actions of the Multidisciplinary Committee.

At the end of this video you'll be prompted with some "Take Action Steps." These are meant to inspire changes in your district, schools, and classroom and will be a common theme throughout our course on Access & Equity.

## WAC 392-170-055

### Assessment Process

- 1) Students nominated for selection as a highly capable student, unless eliminated through screening as provided in WAC [392-170-045](#), shall be assessed by **qualified district personnel**;
- 2) Districts shall use **multiple objective criteria** for identification of students who are among the most highly capable. There is no single prescribed method for identification of students among the most highly capable; and
- 3) Districts shall have a **clearly defined** and written assessment process.



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The purpose of assessment is to gather information relevant to making a decision about which students require enhanced or accelerated learning experiences that align to their learning profiles. To ensure that there are multiple pathways to identification, the identification process a school district creates should use research-based assessment practices. We'll touch on those subjects more in modules 2 and 3. Not all highly capable students will demonstrate the same learning profile of performance or potential; therefore, a variety of types and sources of assessment are necessary. The National Association for Gifted Children's *Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards* state that "Each student reveals his/her exceptionalities and potential through assessment evidence so that appropriate instructional accommodation and modifications can be provided"

While school districts determine their assessment measures, they must use multiple objective criteria for identifying students for highly capable services. There is no single, prescribed method for identification, but school districts are required to clearly define a written process to guide the assessment and selection of students. These procedures should be shared with the public; reflect characteristics of the student population and demographics of the district; be flexible when students' learning profiles warrant alternative approaches; and be communicated to personnel

who will be providing data through the variety of assessments a district selects to use. It is not for committee members to gather data on students from previous grade levels that may inform the assessment and selection process.

Assessment shall be based upon a review of each student's capability as shown by multiple criteria intended to reveal, from a wide variety of sources and data, each student's unique needs and capabilities. **(28A.185.030)**

### **References:**

Ford, D. Y. (2004). *Intelligence testing and cultural diversity: Concerns , cautions, and considerations*. Storrs, CT: The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, University of Connecticut.

Gubbins, E. J. (2005). Constructing identification procedures. In J. H. Purcell & R. D. Eckert, (Eds.), *Designing services and programs for high-ability learners: A guidebook for gifted education* (pp. 49-61). Washington, DC: NAGC.

National Association for Gifted Children. (2010). NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards.: A blueprint for quality gifted education programs. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/standards/K-12%20standards%20booklet.pdf>

## General Recommendations About the Use of Assessments

1. **Multiple sources** provide a more comprehensive view of the students' behaviors.
2. **Qualitative and quantitative data** provides a broader description of the learning needs of students.
3. **Off-level testing** may need to be considered since students with potential in some academic areas may be performing above grade level and off-level testing may be needed to identify their strengths.
4. **Non-biased, equitable, and technically adequate** assessments should be used to identify students' area(s) of strengths.



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The selection of assessments will be aligned to your definition and services you provide to highly capable students. The NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards (2010) identify the following attributes important to selecting a variety of assessments. They include:

1. **Multiple sources** and **multiple types of data** provide a more comprehensive view of the student's behaviors across settings. While districts are allowed to select the multiple types of assessment to use to identify highly capable students, and more importantly to identify the strength area(s) according to the definition used by the district, they should also be used to inform decisions about appropriate programming services.
2. **Qualitative and quantitative data** selected by the district provide a variety of types of information about the learning needs of a student because each provide different information (i.e., achievement, cognitive ability, performance, observation, classroom-based assessment, etc.).
3. **Off-level testing** may need to be considered since students with potential in some academic areas may be performing above grade level and off-grade level testing will be necessary to identify their strengths.
4. **Non-biased, equitable, and technically adequate** assessments should be used

when selecting assessments that will be used in the assessment and selection phase of the identification process.

For further information about types of assessments, see *Module 2: A Deeper Dive into the Uses of Multiple Criteria* and *Module 3: Challenges and Issues in Addressing Diversity*.

### **References:**

National Association for Gifted Children. (2010). NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards.: A blueprint for quality gifted education programs. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/standards/K-12%20standards%20booklet.pdf>

## WAC 392-170-060

### Nondiscrimination in the Use of Tests

All tests and other evaluation materials used in the assessment shall have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and shall accurately reflect whatever factors the tests purport to measure. 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. This professional judgment shall be documented in writing.



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This Washington Administrative Code (WAC) sets a standard for the use of tests to assess eligibility for the highly capable program and requirements for use of professional judgment when validated tests are unavailable. For further discussion, please refer to *Module 2: A Deep Dive into the Use of Multiple Criteria*. A few other reminders about the assessment process that might be helpful are to:

1. Obtain the most **reliable and valid measures** of domain-specific aptitude for all students.
2. Provide and document **appropriate procedures for test takers with disabilities** who need special accommodations or those with diverse linguistics backgrounds.
3. Provide **adequate training to scorers** and ensure and monitor the accuracy of the scoring process
4. Establish a policy for **achieving more equitable representation of underrepresented groups** in programs.

## WAC 392-170-075

### Selection of Most Highly Capable

Each school district's board of directors shall adopt a selection policy and school district shall establish written procedures for the selection of the most highly capable students by the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee. Such policy and selection procedures:

1. Shall **not violate federal and state civil rights laws** including, without limitation, RCW chapters [28A.640](#) and [28A.642](#);
2. Shall be **based on professional judgment** as to which students will benefit the most from inclusion in the district's program; and
3. Shall be **based on a selection system** that determines which students are the most highly capable as defined under WAC [392-170-055](#), and other data collected in the assessment process.



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A district must create procedures for selecting students for highly capable programs. School district representatives on the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee should describe the identification procedures in narrative or outline form. This is to help those responsible for the process to check the status of each procedure and ensure that it is responsive to students' needs.

When the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee makes its selection, some considerations are recommended:

1. Avoid basing selection on composite scores;
2. Analyze data in multiple ways, including looking at students relative to peers who have had similar backgrounds and learning opportunities;
3. Avoid combining test results for purposes not specifically recommended by the test developer unless evidence is obtained to support the intended use;
4. Avoid using a single test score as the sole determinant of decisions about test takers. Interpret test scores in conjunction with other information about students to build a learning profile of strengths and interests; and
5. Match the aptitudes measured to the types of instruction/services that will be provided.

## Some of Decisions Made by the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee

After examining a variety of sources and types of data, the committee may find themselves making one or more of the following determinations:

1. Decide whether a student is to move forward in the identification process for further testing (if a screening process is used).
2. Formally identify a student for the highly capable program with proper notification to parent/legal guardians of this decision and the types of services this student will receive.
3. Select new tools to collect additional data if warranted.
4. Determine data do not support identification at this time and properly notify parent/legal guardians of this decision.
5. Determine if a student (twice-exceptional) may need to be referred for special education assessment in addition to his/her identification for services from the highly capable program.



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After examining a variety of sources and types of data, the committee may find themselves making one or more of the following determinations:

1. Decide whether a student is to move forward in the identification process for further testing (if a screening process is used).
2. Formally identify a student for the highly capable program with proper notification to parent/legal guardians of this decision and types of services to be provided.
3. Select new tools to collect additional data if warranted.
4. Determine data do not support identification at this time and properly notify parent/legal guardians of this decision.
5. Determine if a student (twice-exceptional) may need to be referred for special education assessment in addition to his/her identification for services from the highly capable program.

## Why Do We Identify and Serve?

1. Communicate to your community that the purpose of identifying highly capable learners is to recognize and to address their advanced learning needs.
2. Make the identification process and procedures transparent through various forms of communication.
3. Assure a continuum of services K-12 that provide continuous growth.
4. Engage teachers in ongoing assessment of all students to allow for developmental and academic growth throughout their educational career.
5. Design challenging curriculum and instruction which allows students to demonstrate their strengths and provides evidence of advanced learning needs.



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The importance of assessing and identifying students for services in highly capable programs is to provide a variety of instructional and curricular modifications that match their area(s) of strength. How we go about this identification process is distinct to each district, and to the students whom they serve through the array of services they offer. The process and procedures discussed in this module help us to recognize some important ideas as we work to serve these students by providing them with the appropriate level of instruction aligned to their learning needs. Districts should work to:

1. Communicate to their community that the purpose of identifying highly capable learners is to recognize and to address their advanced learning needs;
2. Make the identification process and procedures transparent through various forms of communication;
3. Assure a continuum of K-12 services that provide continuous growth for identified students.
4. Engage teachers in ongoing assessment of all students to allow for developmental and academic growth throughout their educational career; and
5. Design challenging curriculum and instruction which allows students to demonstrate their strengths and provides evidence of advanced learning needs

that may enhance our knowledge of how to more effectively serve our students.

## Take Action

Examine your own district identification process and procedures that guide the notification, referral, assessment, and selection components found in your identification plan. Are there any changes that need revision to align them to best practices discussed in this module?

### Questions to Prompt Possible Action Steps:

1. Is the identification process and procedures clearly written and made available to all members of your local and school community?
2. Are educators and parents knowledgeable about how this identification process works?
3. Are there any forms that need to be created to support the identification process and its procedures?
4. To what extent are the identification procedures effective for all grade levels and sensitive to student age?
5. Do the procedures reflect the diversity in primary languages, cultures, economics, and academics as the learning needs of students are assessed during the screening and selection processes?
6. Are the selected assessment tools reflective of qualitative and quantitative data that assist you in identifying students' area(s) of strength?
7. Is there a link between the students' needs and the definitions and procedures related to identifying highly capable students?



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This module has served as an introduction to the identification process as outlined in the Washington Administrative Codes to ensure access and equity to all students for services provided by highly capable programs. Now it is time to stop and take action in regards to making improvements to your district's identification plan. Try using the questions on this slide to guide your ideas. What might they be?

## References:

The questions listed on this slide are adapted from the following:

Gubbins, E. J. (2005). Constructing identification procedures. In J. H. Purcell & R. D. Eckert, (Eds.), *Designing services and programs for high-ability learners: A guidebook for gifted education* (pp. 49-61). Washington, DC: NAGC.