



*Every Student Matters, Every Moment Counts*

**Morton School District #214**

**Home of the Timberwolves!**

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**Highly Capable Program**

[RCW 28A.185.020](#) – The legislature finds that, for highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to basic education.

**Purpose**

The Morton School District is focused on successfully preparing all students for leading productive lives in the future. We are further committed to developing the skills of all teachers so that they can meet the unique needs of all learners, including those with exceptional aptitudes.

**Definition**

Morton School District students who are highly capable perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels compared with others of their age, experiences, or environments. Knowing that the most highly capable students can acquire knowledge and produce significantly beyond the standards, the Morton School District has provided a differentiated curriculum designed to develop and offer deeper critical and analytical learning opportunities. These learning alternatives will meet the individual cognitive and affective needs of the most highly capable students.

**Goals**

The Morton School District Highly Capable Program is designed to meet the academic needs of our students in grades K-12 who generally fall in the top 3 percentiles for cognitive aptitude, the top 5 percent academically, and who demonstrate exceptional ingenuity. Our purpose is to provide appropriate educational programs and services through instructional and curriculum modifications to create educational opportunities for Highly Capable students to maximize their potential.

- To provide enriched and accelerated academic opportunities with an emphasis on developing higher-level thinking skills, including application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of content and concepts;
- To offer a rigorous academic curriculum;
- To offer an environment where highly capable students are encouraged to reach their full potential;
- To address the social and emotional needs of highly capable students through teacher support, peer interaction, and by fostering a sense of community; and,
- To prepare students for future contributions to society.

**Program Design**

Services in the Morton School District are designed to enhance learning in the regular classroom setting. Students at the K-6 level in the highly capable program remain with their class throughout the day and move to physical education, art, music, and library with their peers. The Highly Capable Program at the middle school level, grades 7-8, focuses on

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science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), and English/Language Arts. All other content areas are integrated with the general population of students. We continue to provide services to our highly capable students in high school through Running Start college-level courses and by accelerating math and/or English classes. This continuum of services provides appropriate support and accommodations for all highly capable students from identification to graduation.

## **Identification**

### Annual notification

- 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; and,
- As a key component of its Highly Capable Program Identification and Selection Process, the Morton School District will make it a priority to qualify students from various racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups.

### Definition of learning characteristics

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

### Step 1: Initial Screening/Referral

1. Classroom teachers, parents, community members, or students may refer a student (K-12).
2. A nomination form, including consent for testing, must be signed by the parent/guardian and submitted to the school.
3. Nomination forms are located in each building at the office and are available on the website.
4. For the 2014-15 school year, all students for whom permission is received will be administered the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Form 7 Screening Assessment.
5. Those who perform at the 97th percentile or above will be assessed using multiple forms of data, including
  - 5.1. Assessment data from intellectual and academic assessments
  - 5.2. Student information over time, including, but not limited to, artifacts, academic assessments, and performance assessments

### Step 2: Data Review

1. When a student has been referred, the Highly Capable Team collects and reviews applicable data. In addition to standardized test scores, this data must include at least three pieces of supporting evidence such as work samples, grades, and/or parent/teacher referral forms. The Highly Capable Team then decides whether the student:
  - 1.1. meets criteria for identification;
  - 1.2. may meet criteria, but additional information is needed;
  - 1.3. meets potential to perform at or above the 97th percentile, using risk factors; or,
  - 1.4. does not meet the criteria.

### Step 3: Testing

1. When additional information is needed, individual testing may be requested. Parent permission is required for individual testing. Test results will be shared with parents and the Highly Capable Team and become part of the student's permanent record.

### Step 4: Communication

1. Parents and the student's teacher(s) will be notified of the identification decision. Parents have the right to appeal the decision if they disagree and should contact the building principal. If it is not resolved, the parent may file a formal appeal form.

### Re-Entry Process

When a parent voluntarily removes his/her child from the Highly Capable Program then requests reentry later, the following will apply

1. Reentry will be allowed within the same academic year.
2. If a student is on probation (or pre-probation) when she/he leaves the program, she/he will be on probation upon return to the program.

### **Highly Capable Selection Committee**

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

- A classroom teacher appointed to serve on the Highly Capable Team and who understands characteristics of a highly capable student;
- A psychologist or other qualified practitioner with the training to interpret cognitive and achievement test results;
- An administrator with responsibility for the supervision of the district's program for highly capable students; and,
- Additional professionals, if any, the district deems desirable.

### **Highly Capable Program Goals**

#### Student Program Component

- Through curriculum and instructional differentiation, each Highly Capable student will achieve at least one grade level or more in each of his/her core content areas of study taken in the regular classrooms.
- By his/her participation in exploring and pursuing real-life investigations, each Highly Capable student will improve his/her use of various independent skills, exploration of topics of interest, and understanding of real-life experiences as documented in an Individual Student Log/Activity Record.
- By learning about and continuously using critical and creative thinking skills, each Highly Capable student will advance in his/her abilities to effectively use such skills as demonstrated through his/her performance in group discussions, class and/or special assignments, and individual or group investigations.

#### Curriculum and Instruction Component

- The goal of the Highly Capable Program Curriculum and Instruction Component is to assure a planned continuum of appropriate academically challenging and accelerated learning opportunities. These are provided to each most highly capable student using a research-based curriculum and instructional models, methodologies, and resources.

#### Professional Development Component

- The goal of the Highly Capable Program Professional Development Component, is to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for staff and administrators which enhance the level of expertise regarding the teaching of the district's highly capable students both in the regular setting as well as in special programs in grades K-12.

#### Program Evaluation Component

- The goal of the Highly Capable Program Evaluation Component is to assure that the effectiveness of program services is being determined based upon both formative and summative assessments, as well as academic achievement, and are based on the individual goals of students. Evidence will come from student growth scores on state assessments, interim assessments, and classroom-based assessments.
- The Highly Capable Team will convene each spring to evaluate the effective use of HC grant funds. Data will be examined to determine if students achieved their academic goals.

#### Parent and Community Involvement

- The goal of the Highly Capable Program Parent and Community Involvement Component is to provide each parent of a highly capable student(s) and members of the community with opportunities to be informed of and, when appropriate, involved in the learning experiences provided for highly capable students.

#### **Continuum of Services and Delivery**

Consistent with its commitment to effectively meet the needs of our Highly Capable students, the Morton School District will make a variety of appropriate program services available to students who participate in the district's program for such qualified students. Once services are started, a continuum of services will be provided to the student from K-12. Morton School District will periodically review services for each student to ensure that the services are appropriate.

#### K-2

- Service delivery may vary by grade level, grade span, and school-level
- Grade level cluster grouping
- Differentiation in small group instruction
- Individual learning goal activities
- Curriculum compacting

#### 3-6

- Blended learning
- Grade level cluster grouping
- Differentiation in small group instruction
- Individual learning goal activities
- Curriculum compacting

#### 7-8

- Cluster grouping and acceleration (Math and English/Language Arts)
- Differentiation in small group instruction
- Individual learning goal activities
- Curriculum compacting

#### 9-12

- Content differentiation aligned with Student Learning Plan
- Acceleration, Running Start, and/or mentorships addressing Student Learning Plan goals

## **Student Goals**

Goals for the Morton School District Highly Capable Students:

- Demonstrate academic growth by using critical-thinking strategies to advance their levels of understanding of specific interests and topics of inquiry.
- Use problem-solving models in areas of their gifts and talents to demonstrate continuous academic growth.
- Use inquiry models to demonstrate continuous academic growth in the areas of their gifts and talents.
- Demonstrate growth in creative thinking by employing creative-thinking strategies to challenge their areas of gifts and talents.

## **Instructional Program**

The Morton School District Highly Capable Program will provide an instructional program that enhances learning in a push-in model, blended model, and accelerated learning program.

- Curriculum and instructional differentiation will be used in all classrooms to address the initial academic learning needs of the highly capable students, specifically when in the regular classroom.
- Critical and creative thinking skills will be developed through the use of a variety of strategies and programs.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Highly Capable Director(s) role will be to

- Create Student Learning Plans and collaborate with the general education teachers;
- Provide ongoing staff development for the unique needs of the Highly Capable learner in the regular classroom setting;
- Coordinate testing and reporting services; and,
- Participate in parent/teacher conferences, as needed.

Parent's role will be to

- Initiate the Highly Capable identification process on behalf of their child;
- Provide information about their child's development and interests;
- Give input into the selection of appropriate services for their child;
- Communicate with the teacher or district director(s), as needed; and,
- Support school efforts at home.

Principal's role will be to

- Maintain communication with parents;
- Plan and develop services that result in educational progress in all curricular areas in all grade levels;
- Ensure Highly Capable Student Learning Plans are reviewed and refined in collaboration with the Highly Capable Coordinator;
- Hold teachers accountable for the implementation of the Highly Capable Student Learning Plan; and,
- Encourage and support the general education teacher for the Highly Capable student needs.

Teacher's role will be to

- Initiate the Highly Capable identification process on behalf of a student (NOTE – anyone can refer a student and that option needs to be encouraged);
- Implement the Highly Capable Student Learning Plan;
- Assess and monitor the rate of learning in different content areas;
- Differentiate curriculum and instruction; and,
- Advance the level of understanding using Common Core State Standards.

## **Professional Development**

The Morton School District recognizes that a special teacher of highly capable students is one who has training, experience, advanced skills, and knowledge in the education of highly capable or gifted students. Therefore, it is essential that as a district and as a professional community, we have a very clear commitment to assuring that each of our teachers who work with highly capable students either in the regular classroom or in special courses of study has the training necessary to appropriately enhance the learning opportunities for each highly capable student. In order to meet this need, the district will provide appropriate educational programs and services through instructional, curricular, and administrative modifications to create educational opportunities for Highly Capable students which will maximize their individual potential.

## **Policy and Procedures**

### WAC 392-170-042 Annual Notification

- Annual public notification of parents and students shall be made before any major identification activity.

### WAC 392-170-020 District Plans for the district's highly capable program

- Submit an annual plan to OSPI and keep it on file at the District Office.

### WAC 392-170-075 Selection of most highly capable students

The Morton School District's Board of Directors shall adopt policies and procedures for selecting the most highly capable students by the multidisciplinary selection committee. Such policies and selection procedures:

- Shall not violate federal and state civil rights laws, including, without limitation, chapters 28A.640 and 28A.642 RCW.;
- Shall be based on professional judgment as to which students will benefit the most from inclusion in the district's program; and,
- 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.