



Highline Public Schools Board Action Report

☒ Supports the Strategic Plan

DATE: September 13, 2022

FROM: Dr. Ivan Duran, Superintendent

LEAD STAFF: Meghan Terwillegar, Director of Instructional Technology Integration

For Introduction: 9/21/2022 For Action: 10/5/2022

I. TITLE Approval of Annual Highly Capable Students Program State Formula Grant 2022-2023

II. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY

The Highly Capable Students Program formula grant is awarded annually to help support Highly Capable programming in school districts. OSPI requires school boards to review and approve district program plans to be documented in meeting minutes.

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Highly Capable Program Plan iGrants application is completed annually by each school district and provides details about the district's highly capable program for students identified as eligible for highly capable services. Grant funds support professional learning for teachers, student testing and identification, supplemental program materials, program management, and stakeholder engagement.

The Highly Capable Annual Plan (attached) identified priorities for 2022-23, including the continued use of new/additional identification tools, and continued implementation of Earned Honors at middle school, Challenge program and Highly Capable Learning Plans. These strategies are in service of our commitment to a more equitable identification process and developing options for a continuum of services in each school.

IV. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the Highline School Board approve the Highly Capable state grant application and annual program plan for the 2022-23 school year.

V. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

Projected state allocation of \$602,043

The revenue source for this motion is state funding allocated from Washington State OSPI.

Expenditure: ☐ One-time ☒ Annual

VI. APPLICABLE POLICY(S)

This action is in compliance with the following: 2190 and 2190P

VII. ALTERNATIVES

Failure to approve the Highly Capable state grant application and program plan would adversely affect state funding for 2022-23.

VIII. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement Required: ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, list community engagement conducted for this issue

IX. ATTACHMENTS

2022-2023 Highly Capable Program Action Plan



Highline Public Schools Highly Capable Annual Plan, 2022-23

This plan was developed by members of the Teaching, Learning, and Leadership team in Summer 2022 in response to the state's annual form package 217 for Highly Capable funding. It is a dynamic document, and will be revised with support of teachers, principals, and families via the Highly Capable Advisory Team, Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee, and other stakeholder conversations.

Informed by input from stakeholders across the system, the following areas have been identified for continued prioritization and development:

- Improve equitable and proportionate identification and services for students across Highline
- Develop and implement a variety of service delivery options for students identified as Highly Capable, including options within general education settings
- Support teachers in general education and highly capable program to understand and respond to the unique needs of highly capable learners

This plan is meant to be a comprehensive document that pulls together information shared on the Highline Public Schools website, in communication to schools and families, and in programmatic documents used with teachers and staff. Questions related to any aspect of this plan may be directed to our highly capable team at highlycapable@highlineschools.org.

Sections:

1. [Mission, Vision, and Values](#)
2. [Identification Process](#): Notification, Referral, Screening, Assessment, Selection, Appeal
3. [Services to identified students](#)
4. [Evaluation](#)

Mission, Vision, and Values

In Highline our promise is that each student is known by name, strength, and need, and graduates prepared for the future they choose. We are guided by our Equity Policy which explicitly calls us to be an anti-racist organization. We are committed to providing academic challenge for our students, including those who are meeting and/or exceeding standards, so that they can meet their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally to prepare them for life beyond high school.

To realize this vision, we are building a strong multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and supporting the implementation of personalized learning communities (PLC's) within schools. The primary goal of each PLC is to develop and implement instructional plans informed by four key questions:

1. What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know if they learn it?
3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?
4. How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?

We recognize that each of our students are unique in how they learn and we embrace learner variability as an asset that adds value to our classroom communities. We aim to support this variability through Universal Design for Learning (UDL), an approach to instructional planning that offers flexibility in the ways that students access material, engage with it, and show what they know. This approach will benefit learners whether instruction is provided in a traditional or virtual learning format.

We are also committed to supporting the progress of Highline Schools as an inclusive school system. In part, this includes developing a continuum of supports at every school, eliminate segregated programming, and recognizing past and present disproportionate placement of students due to race and ethnicity, disciplinary action, language learning status, disability, and any other label we have assigned our students. We believe that our services to students should not be dependent on places that remove them from their peers, but on our beliefs, skills and systems that allow individual needs to be met to reach their full potential.

In the Highline [Strategic Plan](#), we have identified five bold goals supported by a foundation of equity, instruction, relationships, and support. Our goals include:

School Culture: Our schools are welcoming and safe places where students and staff are respected and supported to succeed.

Growth and Mastery: Students will make a minimum of one year of growth annually, meeting or exceeding standards in all grade levels.

Digital and Media Literacy: Students will graduate with the problem solving and critical thinking skills necessary to live and work in a digital world.

Bilingual and Biliterate: Students will graduate bilingual and biliterate.

High School Graduation: Students will graduate from high school prepared for the future they choose.

As we work to ensure these goals are realized for all students, we are committed to identifying and meeting the needs of our students who are identified as eligible for highly capable services. 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.” (WAC 392-170-035)

Rigorous state learning standards, including the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards as well as social emotional competencies, set a high level of expectation for our students. Our Highly Capable services prioritize depth of learning and application rather than pace of instruction or advancement of grade level content. We know that the ability to work and learn as a part of a diverse peer group makes for lifelong learners and contributes to the greatest success in school, college, career, and citizenship.

We often hear from teachers and families of students accessing highly capable services that their student “doesn’t try very hard” or “has holes in their learning.” We know from research that this is often the result when we see “gifted” as a static quality and we focus solely on advancement. We also know from research that students do not learn the same way or at the same rate; furthermore, they

may need to approach learning from multiple perspectives and in general, will benefit from focusing on a depth of understanding not just breadth of content.

As such, our intent is to provide balanced opportunities for students to deepen and extend their learning when appropriate to achieve a greater depth of knowledge and reach their full potential as scholars. Students should make at least one grade level of growth from their starting point each year, and consistently increase capacity to engage independently and collaboratively in rigorous work.

Equity is a central tenet of our values. We are committed to ensuring that students who are eligible for Highly Capable services increasingly reflect the demographics of our district. We are continually working to strengthen our identification process to consider as many students as possible. This is not a short-term strategy. We will continually evaluate and adjust our identification processes as well as our service delivery models in accordance with the [Highline Equity Policy](#) and utilizing the [Highline Equity Lens](#).

Identification Process:

Despite our commitment to equitable identification, our identified students do not yet mirror the diversity of our school district. The chart below illustrates trends in identification over the last six years, specifically for identified students in grades 2 through 8.

Our Hispanic, Black and African American students continue to be underrepresented in our Highly Capable program, as our White students continue to be overrepresented.

Highly Capable Grades 2-8 Enrollment

	2015-16 331 students	2016-17 358 students	2017-18 372 students	2018-19 348 students	2019-20 365 students	2020-21 359 students	2021-22 336 students	Highline Public Schools Overall Enrollment 2021-22
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	1%
Asian	26%	23%	20%	18%	20%	20%	20%	14%
Black or African American	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	8%	6%	14%
Hispanic	14%	13%	15%	12%	11%	12%	10%	41%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2%	2%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	4%

Two or More Races	8%	7%	6%	7%	7%	5%	11%	9%
White	42%	46%	49%	55%	55%	54%	52%	17%
English Language Learner	3%	4%	6%	7%	12%	17%	5%	33%
Special Education	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	7%	6%	15%

While we are far from our goal of ensuring that our highly capable program represents the student population of Highline Public Schools, the strategies that will be employed to further equitable identification will include:

- Intentional outreach to staff: We will engage in school-focused outreach to ensure teachers and staff in our underrepresented schools understand qualities of Highly Capable Learners and access the nomination process for students for whom academic measures may not accurately represent a student's capabilities.
- Improved communication to families: We will continue to use electronic communication, available in families' home language, using platforms with which families are already familiar. Additionally, we are working to ensure that staff members at each school are well equipped to provide information to families with whom they have relationships.
- Updated measures for screening/identification: While no tool is completely without bias and barriers, the following shifts will be made to our process for 2022-23:
 - Continued use of our identification tool, the NNAT3, a non-verbal cognitive assessment tool, which removes language barriers that that may have been in place with previous assessments.
 - NNAT3 will be an initial assessment with consideration of additional data points
 - iReady will continue to offer helpful information about proficiency and growth level. This can provide valuable information about the learning capabilities of our students.
 - Continued use of the HOPE Scale, a tool to support teacher recognition of academic and social/affective components of giftedness as part of the nomination and identification process
 - Continued use of WIDA data around language acquisition rates provides another valuable perspective on the strengths of our multilingual learners.

Finally, we will continue to use the Highline Equity Lens to interrogate and improve our identification process in service of racial equity. We commit to acting on our growing awareness of institutional bias that negatively affects our students of color, and to developing and implementing opportunities for all Highline students to engage in challenging and relevant learning opportunities.

Notification

Families are notified about highly capable programs in several ways:

- Our district website is regularly updated with the most current information on our Highly Capable programming, identification process, and relevant timelines. If specific dates for the current school year are not yet available, timeframes are provided during which families can expect additional details.
- A communication is sent via our electronic newsletter platform, School Messenger, to families of all students in grades 1-7 notifying them of the grades 2-8 highly capable program and our process for testing and identification. This communication is not sent to students who will be in high school settings the following year because almost all HPS students have been screened multiple times and have received our notification letter in earlier grades. This communication is sent approximately one month prior to the start of any testing and is translated into the five most common languages spoken in our community (Spanish, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Somali). Individual translation is provided in other languages as needed.
- School-based staff and district social media are also sources of information for families.

Screening/Referrals

We are committed to providing equitable opportunities for students in Highline. For the 2022-23 school year, all students in grades K-2 in HPS will be screened for Highly Capable services. We believe this process is critical in the early years because of the rapid and variable brain development in young children. We also recognize that intelligence does not always present itself in traditional ways in early grades, especially for students for whom English may not be a first language and those without access to early learning experiences. This universal screening is the basis of our talent development model.

Students in grades 1-7 may be nominated for consideration for Highly Capable services by their parent/guardian, teacher, principal, other staff member, other students, or a community member by calling or e-mailing the Teaching, Learning and Leadership department at any time prior to the beginning of the testing/identification process each year. If a student is nominated and their grades/test scores are generally proficient, she/he is automatically included in the full testing/identification process.

A student may also be nominated for the program by a school based MTSS team after a review of assessment data, evidence of learning, and/or consideration of other highly capable attributes. In the 2022-23 school year, our Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee will also review available student data for students in grades 3-7, inviting students exhibiting strong performance to participate in our identification process.

Screening Procedures

Please note, due to COVID-19, not all students were available for in-person assessments in the spring of 2021. To ensure equitable access by all Highline students, the identification process was delayed to the fall of 2021 in the anticipation of returning to in person instruction.

We will return to a typical spring identification process for the 2022-23 school year.

The following data points are considered as a part of our identification process for 2022-23 which takes place in the winter:

	iReady Assessment	NNAT3	SBA	WIDA English Proficiency Measure	Common classroom-based assessments, when available
K	X			X	X
1-2	X	X		X	X
3-7	X		X	X	X
8-12	X*		X	X	X

**iReady is administered for selected students only in grades 9-12*

In this process, we look at the confluence of data based on the recommendations of the Multi-Disciplinary Selection Committee. Determinations are informed by high performance in the cognitive screener and across measures for significant areas of rapid growth.

More about the assessments:

- The NNAT3 is a test that all 1st – 2nd grade students will take during the 2022-23 school year. This measure provides information regarding student cognitive abilities and reasoning skills. This data is used to build a more complete picture of a student and help identify areas of strength and need that may not yet be evident in traditional academic assessments.
- The iReady assessment is our district adopted proficiency and growth measurement tool and is administered two to three times each year in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The assessment focuses on student mastery of and growth in state learning standards.
- The SBA (Smarter Balanced Assessment) is a state-required assessment used to measure students' proficiency on grade-level standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The SBA is typically administered each spring beginning in 3rd grade.
- The WIDA ACCESS is a state-required assessment of students' English-language proficiency. It is typically administered in the spring each year to students identified in last year's testing, during our intake/registration with the school district, or for students identified by teachers as needing additional support to learn English.
- Classroom/unit assessments - Unit assessments are provided as part of the standard curriculum in math and literacy. Additional classroom formative assessments are ongoing observations that happen informally at several points throughout each day and may include on-demand writing tasks, IRLA/ENIL Reading assessments, and student presentation of work.

Assessment and Selection

Students participating in our identification process will take the NNAT3. This assessment is a nonverbal measure of general ability for school aged children. This assessment does not require English Language

or specific quantitative skills and provides information on a student's reasoning and problem-solving abilities.

After all assessment data are collected, the Multidisciplinary Committee (MDC) meets in the spring to review the data and collection of evidence to make recommendations of eligibility for highly capable services. We seek to get a full understanding of student strengths and may reach out to teachers when we have questions about the available data.

For 2022-23, we will continue to ask teachers to provide insight on student strengths through use of the HOPE teacher rating scale. Information gathered from this tool will not be used to exclude any student from identification but may serve as another data source to support identification when other data is not consistent.

The MDC is comprised of people who hold the following roles and backgrounds in the district: central office administrators, curriculum and instruction directors, special education team members, school counselors and/or psychologists, principals in schools with highly capable programs, and teachers of students who are identified as highly capable.

Caregiver permission to test and beginning services

In 2022-23, all families of students in grades 1-7 will be notified via email with information about the program and identification process. This message includes directions for opting their student out of the process, and is translated as needed into Spanish, Vietnamese, and Amharic, and Somali.

For all students who participate in our identification process and are determined eligible for services, a letter is sent home to families. The letter has Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, and Amharic translations. For students who are determined to be eligible for services, families must return a form that indicates their desire to accept the services. This process was changed to an online form in 2021-2022. Families may also call or email the Highly Capable department to accept services.

Services to Identified Students

We strive to provide educational opportunities that consider each student's strengths and needs. At its best, instruction should be personalized, data-driven, and strength-based.

Kindergarten and 1st grade services are provided in the student's home school/classroom, with teachers providing extensions during literacy and math blocks.

Our 2022-2023 services in grades 3-8 include:

- **Highly Capable Service Plan** - The Highly Capable Learning Plan provides students in elementary and middle school with an option to receive services at their neighborhood school in their general education classroom. The plan may include differentiated instruction including small group support with peers and enrichment opportunities.
- **Challenge** – Elementary Challenge classrooms are places where highly capable students can grow as learners. The Challenge curriculum is the same as the rest of the students at their grade level with the opportunity for learning more about a topic. See this [website page](#) for more

information about program locations. There are locations for both elementary and middle school students.

- **Earned Honors** - Earned Honors provides an opportunity to deepen learning for all students who are demonstrating mastery of grade-level standard(s) and showing potential to benefit from enhanced work based on their strengths and learning needs. For students who qualify for highly capable services, this option allows students to remain in the general education setting classroom.

Our services in high school include intentional course pathways that continue students' accelerated trajectory toward success in college-like coursework (AP, IB, Running Start and College in the High School). Students will be encouraged to take these college-like courses as early as possible in high school, while still engaging in foundational courses to fulfill graduation and academic program requirements and continue the learning trajectory by taking the highest-level courses available either at their school or at local colleges through Running Start.

Program Components:

Literacy

- Our highly capable services use a balanced literacy model which combines a focus on grade level standards as well as activities specific to the students' individual level of reading and writing.
- Our teachers utilize instructional frameworks and the adopted literacy curriculum (ARC Core in elementary, Inquiry by Design in secondary). These research-based units enable teachers to push students along a progression of learning that results in a high level of cognitive challenge where students grapple with important complexities and go deeper within grade level standard.
- In the Challenge program (3-8), there is a strong focus on high-level, rigorous work and projects that push students to think critically and creatively and express their understanding through multiple types of written and oral expressions. Teachers who support students eligible for highly capable who are not in the Challenge program are encouraged to provide opportunities for rigorous interdisciplinary thinking as well, supported by adopted curriculum/HPS instructional frameworks.

Math

- Our math curriculum in grades 2-5 is aligned to state learning standards. The SFUSD Core Math Curriculum was adopted as Highline's K-5 core math materials, beginning in the 2019-20 school year. The curriculum uses a task-based approach to math teaching that focuses on learning through problem solving. These tasks offer all students opportunities to engage in meaningful and rigorous mathematics that allow for the development of the Standards for Mathematical Practice. Our priority will continue to be depth of understanding of grade level content to ensure success in advanced courses later in the student's academic career.
- In Secondary (grades 6-12), our math curriculum is aligned to state learning standards. Highline has adopted Open Up Resources for grades 6 through 8 and enVision AGA for Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2 for its core math materials. All students will take foundational middle school math in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. We prioritize depth of understanding of grade level content as this approach supports the success of any student who pursues higher-level math classes in high school. High school math pathway options will allow all students the opportunity to participate in advanced level math.

Professional learning opportunities for teachers of students eligible for highly capable services is focused on building deep understanding of the state learning standards so they can identify when students are

approaching standard, meeting standard, and/or exceeding standard, as well as build their understanding of units, lessons, and activities that support students to think strategically and critically. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is also a priority to honor learner variability and address barriers that may arise for students. Additionally, a focus on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) enables teaching teams to work together to answer key questions, including “How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?”. Finally, targeted professional learning opportunities will be provided for teachers in general education and highly capable settings around understanding and responding to the unique needs of all learners.

Evaluation

To meet our goals of excellence and equity for students eligible for highly capable services, it is critical that we engage in robust program evaluation. We believe that students receiving highly capable services should master, not just be proficient in, grade-level state learning standards. This would mean they are regularly exposed to and engaging in extended thinking.

Our iReady and Smarter Balanced Assessments are Highline’s indicators of academic growth and performance, and the data is typically reviewed each fall for students receiving highly capable services. Annual surveys are also regularly administered to students, families, and staff allowing for valuable information around learning and growth areas that are often harder to measure via traditional assessments.

The other critical factor that we evaluate is equity of services. State law requires us to “review identification procedures to make sure student selection reflects the demographics of the area they serve.” While some progress has been made over the last several years, we are far from achieving proportionate representation across student groups. Identification strategies described throughout this annual plan are aligned with our commitment to continued improvement in this area, and our system-wide commitment to becoming an anti-racist school district.