

BISD Highly Capable Program FAQs

1. How do I know if I should refer my child for eligibility testing for Highly Capable Services?

[National Association for Gifted Children](#) provides information on informal assessments and checklists to help address this question. The [Office for Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\)](#) also has helpful information.

2. My student is already in the BISD Highly Capable Program. Do current hi-cap students have to test each year?

No. Once students are identified, they remain in the program as long as they meet the achievement criteria.

3. Where do I obtain the necessary forms in order to refer my student?

Forms are available online on our [District Highly Capable website](#), in your school's front office, through your school's highly capable manager, or your student's teacher.

4. How often can my child test?

Students may only test once every 12 months. [For an overview of the Highly Capable Referral Process, please visit the BISD Highly Capable Program website.](#)

5. What tests are students given?

Students take the CogAT Full Battery assessment. CogAT appraises the cognitive development of students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The test measures the student's learned reasoning abilities. Although grounded in biological processes, these abilities are developed through in-school and out-of-school experiences.

The questions on CogAT require students to demonstrate their reasoning abilities in each of the three symbol systems most closely related to success in school: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning and nonverbal reasoning.

- The Verbal Battery assesses students' abilities to use search, retrieval and comparison processes that are essential for verbal reasoning.
- The Quantitative Battery assesses students' abilities to reason about patterns and relations using concepts that are essential in quantitative thinking.
- The Nonverbal Battery assesses students' abilities to reason with somewhat more novel questions that use spatial and figural content.

6. What grade levels of students are tested/screened?

Students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade are tested/screened when they are referred by parents or teachers.

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7. What factors/achievement scores are considered when determining if a student qualifies for Highly Capable services or not?

Students may be tested in during the fall window for identification as Highly Capable, thus qualifying for the Highly Capable Program and Services. Students who test in the 95th-plus percentile in at least two areas on the CogAT (e.g. verbal, quantitative, non-verbal) or composite scores and have a 95th percentile or above in reading and math on district administered (e.g. Fastbridge) or state normed achievement tests (e.g. Smarter Balanced Assessment - SBA) will be considered. Teacher input as well as other data points (e.g. report cards) may also be considered by the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). For more information, please contact the Highly Capable Director, Jeffrey McCormick, at jmccormick@bisd303.org.

Again, [OSPI has helpful information about the selection process.](#)

8. Are there “cut scores” for students to be identified or not identified?

As stated in Question 7, the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MDC) considers all factors in determining eligibility. The eligibility thresholds are neither absolute qualifiers nor disqualifiers; teacher input is also an important consideration.

For example: A student may have achievement scores that do not quite meet the requirement. Although the scores are slightly lower than the required percentile, cognitive scores, achievement history, and the Teacher Rating Scale are taken into consideration to inform a final decision as to that student's eligibility. Also, in order to provide equitable opportunities for all students, the MSC considers factors such as cultural diversity, socioeconomic status, linguistic background, and identified disability in its deliberations.

9. What is the window for referring my student for hi-cap testing?

[Nomination forms](#) are distributed to parents in late September for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Forms should be filled out completely, signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the school your student attends before the designated deadline. Nominated children will be tested during a district testing window in September and October.

10. How and when will I know if my student is scheduled for assessment?

All students with a Student Referral Form on file and who have not been tested within the last 12 calendar months are eligible to test. You will be contacted through the US Postal Service mail with the date, time, and location of the assessment.

11. What if we missed testing because we just moved to Bainbridge Island?

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New students enrolled in the Bainbridge Island School District and residents who move into the district will have their cumulative files reviewed by members of the multidisciplinary team during their regularly scheduled monthly meeting. Students who were identified as highly cable and/or academically gifted in their previous district are not automatically eligible for services in BISD. State law requires each district to create their own identification process. There is an exception for students who were identified as highly capable when attending a Department of Defense School.

12. How do I prepare my student for the testing session?

Students need not prepare for the testing session. In order to get an appropriate result and subsequent placement, we want to ensure the results are accurate. Therefore, no test preparation is required and/or recommended. Every student referred to take the CoGAT test will be given a set of practice questions published by the testing company to help ensure equal access to the types of questions found on the assessment.

13. How long will the test/screening session take?

The CoGAT screener takes approximately one hour to complete. The remaining subtests that comprise the remainder of the full CoGAT takes about 90 minutes to complete. The subtests are timed with most taking between 9-15 minutes each.

14. What does the test/screening cost?

There is no cost for the testing/screening required for consideration of placement into the BISD highly capable program.

15. Can parents observe while their student is being tested?

No, as it can be disruptive for students taking tests. Students tend to perform better when they are not being observed by parents.

16. What if my student is sick and cannot take the test on the scheduled date?

One make-up date will be scheduled for each test approximately one week after the original test date. Please contact your school's Highly Capable Manager to reschedule.

17. When will we know the results of testing?

You will be informed of your student's eligibility through the United States Postal Service. Test booklets and answer sheets are not available and are held in strict confidence. Results are not available until all testing has been completed and eligibility has been determined by the Multidisciplinary Committee.

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18. I had my child privately tested. May I submit these results with the application?

Yes. However, BISD does not accept private testing results as a substitute for the Highly Capable identification process. All students must go through the District's identification process to be eligible for the Highly Capable Program.

19. My student was in a Highly Capable Program at his/her previous school in another district. Does that mean they automatically get into BISD's Highly Capable Program?

No, it is not an automatic placement. Please provide your student's BISD School with a copy of their testing data, plus any other academic achievement support data. This will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee to determine if they can be placed in the highly capable program or need to complete the BISD identification process.

20. What is the Multidisciplinary Selection Committee (MDC)?

In compliance with the Washington Administrative Code: WAC 392-170-070, The Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) 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 (endorsed in gifted education): Provided, 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.

21. May out-of-district students apply?

No. Testing is provided at no cost for students who attend school in the Bainbridge Island School District. Private school students are not eligible to test. A student moving into the district must be enrolled or reside within BISD's boundaries prior to testing.

22. What if my student does not get into the program? What support is there for students who don't qualify but are in need of differentiation?

Students who apply to the Highly Capable Program are bright students who typically do well in school and will continue to do well even if they do not qualify for the Highly Capable Program. Your student's teacher, counselor, and differentiation specialist may also work with you to identify enrichment

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opportunities for your student. Appeals regarding assessment determinations will be addressed through the appeals process.

23. Can I appeal the MDT decision?

The Bainbridge Island School District, in compliance with the Washington State rules for Highly Capable Programs (WAC 392-170-076), has an appeal process. **Please note: Screening decisions and/or placement decisions, as allowed under statute, are not subject to appeal.**

You may file an appeal of the selection decision based on one of the following criteria:

- A condition or circumstance believed to have caused a misinterpretation of the testing results, (for example, an incorrect birth date or grade level used in calculation of the student's score).
- An **extraordinary** circumstance occurred **during the testing period** that may negatively affect the validity of the test results (such as a death in the family or extreme physical ailment); this must be communicated to the district office in writing **within two weeks of the end of the district testing window**.
- The suspicion of an error in the administration of the assessment.
- A misapplication or miscalculation of the scores by the selection committee.

Appeals submitted for reasons other than above will be denied without further consideration. No outside testing will be considered.

To file an appeal you must contact Jeffrey McCormick, Director of Highly Capable Program, at jmccormick@bisd303.org. BISD must be notified within ten (10) workdays following the mail notification of score results.

All appeals will go before the Appeal Review Team and you will be notified of the decision by mail. The purpose of the Appeal Review Team is to consider individual circumstances based on the criteria above, that may have impacted the student's evaluation data. **The decision of the Appeal Review Team is final.** It is the goal of the Bainbridge Island School District to provide all of our students with appropriate academic services.

24. What are the highly capable services in BISD schools?

Please visit [BISD's Highly Capable website](#) and/or individual school websites for program descriptions.

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25. My student has been identified as highly capable by BISD and services have been offered. How can I learn more about the hi-cap program?

We encourage parents to follow up with their building highly capable manager, teacher, counselor and/or principal.

26. Can I opt my student out of the highly capable program? What if I feel the program is no longer appropriate for my child?

Parents and guardians may choose to withdraw from the highly capable program permanently or opt-out for the current academic year. Contact Jeffrey McCormick at jmccormick@bisd303.org for more information.

27. Does my student need to be identified as highly capable in order to enroll in an advanced math class?

No. Students are placed in advanced math class, starting in grade 5, independent of their highly capable status. While highly capable status is one factor in the assessment/screening process, it is not a requirement, nor is it a weighted component of qualification. Students receive advanced math placement using a variety of criteria, the most important being a demonstration of readiness using a math mastery assessment.

28. If my child has an IEP can they also be identified as Highly Capable?

Yes.

29. Are there accommodations for students who have IEPs or 504 plans?

Yes. Testing accommodations identified in the 504 or IEP will be offered and/or provided while administering the CogAT.