

Mercer Island School District Highly Capable Review



The Center for Educational Effectiveness

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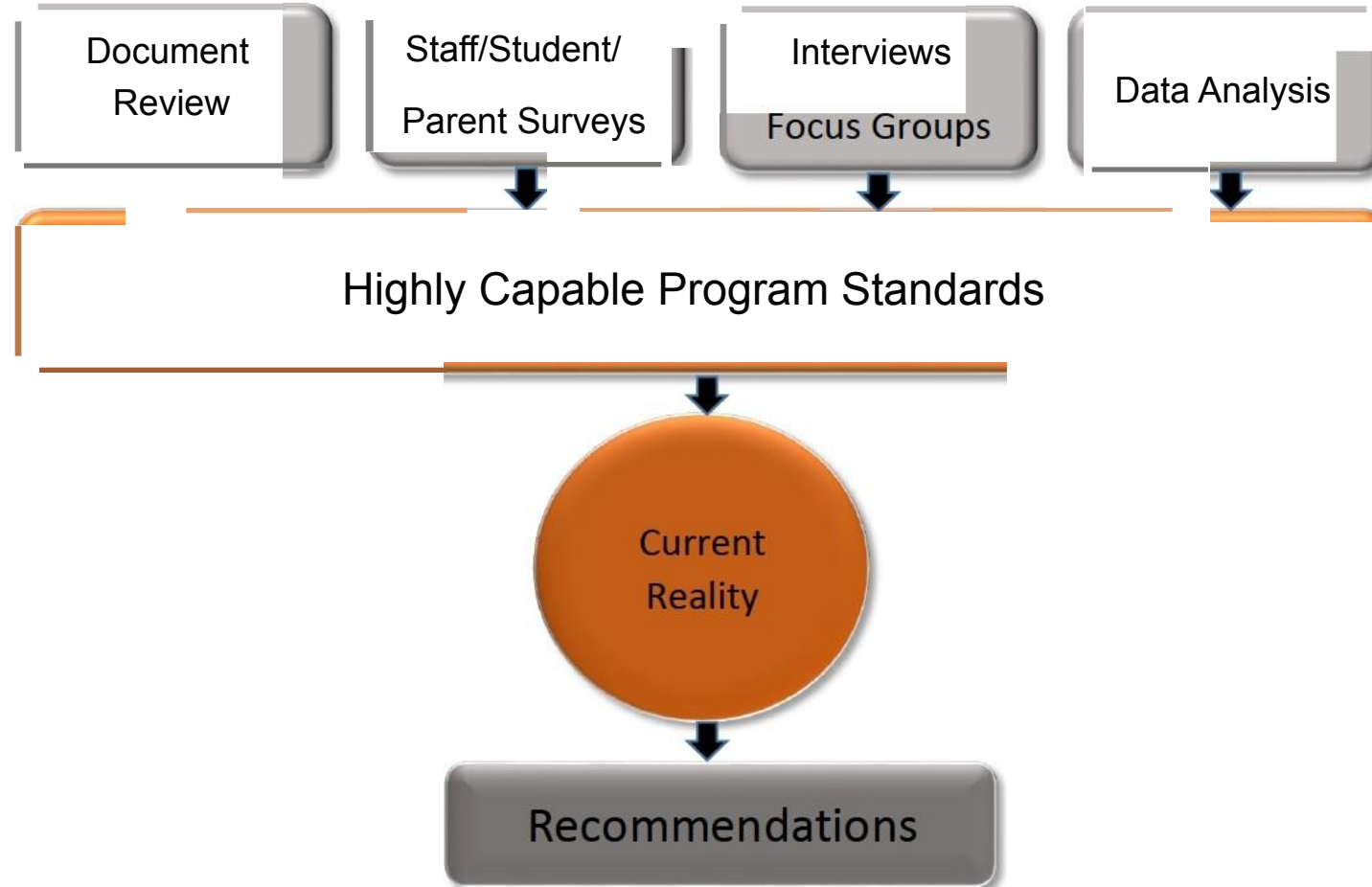
Why

Mercer Island School District initiated review for the following reasons:

- Gather perception of all district stakeholders regarding the Highly Capable program
- Is the district equitably serving all students?
- Assure alignment with National and State Standards
 - *2010 Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards, National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)*

Methodology

> - Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of 4 domains



Methodology

- **Document Review**-Qualitative review of all documents related to the Highly Capable program.
 - 20 critical documents we analyze: Program definitions and plans. Referral process. Assessment processes and appeals. Program definition, implementation, and program monitoring and reporting

- **Demographics and Achievement**-Quantitative analysis of participation, disproportionality, and performance.
 - Demographic analysis: Enrollment, gender, ethnicity, poverty status, Special Education status, English Learners (2nd language)
 - Performance: English, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science analyzed for raw performance, grade to grade growth, and instructional “strands”

Methodology

- **Focus Groups / Interviews**-Qualitative focus groups across staff, students, and parents.
 - Included both those served and not served in the Highly Capable program.
Discussion guide
based on the NAGC programming standards
- **Educational Effectiveness Survey**-Highly Capable edition for Staff, Students, and Parents.
 - Quantitative analysis of responses from staff, students, and parents. Closely aligned to the NAGC programming standards.

What Did We Learn?

Major Areas of Focus

- >- Program Design
- >- Collaboration
- >- Professional Development
- >- Differentiating for Social and Emotional Health
- >- Equity and Access
- >-
- >-



Program Design

- Cognitive and academic data points are used to determine eligibility
- Over identification of total number of students for inclusion in program
- Homogenous grouping limitations
- Elementary program varies between two schools

Collaborati on

- Lack of continuity between levels/buildings
- Absence of evidence supporting all stakeholders having input into program
- Parents not aware of outside resources that may be available for their student
 - Out of school tutoring may be exception (Kumon, Privett)

Professional Development

Development

- Very limited amounts of professional development for teachers
 - Some teachers have been sent to WAETAG and Confratute
 - Only teachers in HiCap sent
- Professional development for HiCap teachers only impacts HiCap students
- No evidence of continued professional development for HiCap educators
- Professional development regarding differentiation strategies missing for all staff

Differentiation for Social Emotional Health

- Excessive amount of homework at all levels
- Expectations of students in program may not be age appropriate
- Students in HiCap not able to learn, collaborate and socialize with age group peers in elementary and middle schools
- High levels of stress among HiCap students
- Lack of data points beyond cognitive and academic used to identify students for the program

Equity and Access

Access

Many areas identified in previous focus areas Additionally:

- Students able to study for the test in order to qualify
 - Parents provided additional hours of tutoring or purchased an independent tutor using “packet”
- Proportionality
 - Disproportionality for some races and ethnicities
 - Parent persistence
- Majority of Parents, Staff and Students feel program is creating elitism



Recommendation



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Program

Design

Use additional data sources

- Achievement, behavior, teacher observation
- Schoolwide Enrichment Model

Consider other program configurations

- Enable students to be chronological aged peers

Research programming options that would include all students

- Schoolwide Enrichment Model
- Project Based Learning

Identify non-negotiable parts of the program to be implemented with fidelity in both elementary programs under the current model while program is in transition

The
Schoolwide
Enrichment
Model

Model
Talent Development
Level
Development



Collaboration

Provide time for staff to collaborate:

- Building
- Level (Elementary and Secondary)
- Vertical (K-12)

Create an advisory group to include all stakeholders from both HiCap and General Education (parents, students, staff, administrators)



Professional Development

Provide ongoing professional development for all staff in the following:

- Differentiation for all students
- Unique needs of true HiCap students
- Partner with a consultant to provide on-going job embedded professional development for students
- Create opportunities for students to work and interact with students of all abilities

Differentiation for Social/Emotional Success

- Review homework requirements for students
- Create opportunities for age group peers to interact
- Include additional data points that reflect behavioral characteristics of students
- Review program expectations to ensure they are age appropriate

Equity and Access

Recommendations from previous focus areas will assist in improving this area.

Additionally:

- Review proportionality reports to see where program is disproportionate.



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Role of the Advisory Council

Responsibilities of Confidentiality

You'll be provided with the full report, which contains student, parent, and teacher comments. There are some important things to remember about your role on this committee, as it relates to the full report.

- Our conversations are about the program, not the people.
- Keep in mind that comments are perceptual information, based on one person's opinion.
- Do not share information that specifies schools or programs with others.
- Confidentiality is expected

Questions for Roni and Greg