



## Elementary Learning Support

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October 18, 2011

Dear Parents of Second Graders:

This letter is to inform you that we will be administering the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) to all second graders this year. The test will be administered in your student's classroom by his/her teacher between December 5<sup>th</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup>. The CogAT data will be used as one factor in determining eligibility for entrance to our Highly Capable Program. The results will also be used as a data point to check and monitor your student's progress.

The CogAT is a norm-referenced test – an untimed test that appraises a student's ability to reason and solve problems. The development of cognitive abilities, which starts at birth and continues throughout life, is influenced by experiences both in and out of school. Questions are presented in a multiple choice format. It's not like a spelling or a math test where if you know the words or the facts you can get 100%. There are three parts to the CogAT: Verbal Battery, Quantitative Battery, and Non-Verbal Battery.

Students will be given practice questions to familiarize themselves prior to starting the testing. This will help to make sure they feel comfortable with the testing and to perform to the best of their ability.

Students may be nominated for the program by their parent or teacher. They may also self nominate. In all cases the parent must fill out an electronic or paper nomination form. To complete an electronic nomination form, go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8MSLNPW>. The Highly Capable Program Policy, Testing Timeline and paper Nomination Form are available on the district website: <http://www.misd.k12.wa.us/curriculum/gifted/gifted.html>

If you believe your child may be highly capable, we encourage you to consider nominating him/her for the program. **The deadline for nominations to participate for the 2012-2013 school year is November 10, 2011.**

The Highly Capable Program, located at West Mercer Elementary and Islander Middle School, is based on the premise that highly capable students require modified instructional strategies to meet their learning needs. It is designed to meet the needs of our students who fall in the top 2 percentiles for academic aptitude, the top 10% for academic achievement, and students who demonstrate exceptional creativity. It is a self contained, rigorous, fast paced program designed to meet the needs of a very small population of students. A separate letter with Characteristics of Highly Capable Students and information about the Highly Capable Program nomination and testing process has been sent to all parents via Constant Contact.

If you have any questions about the Cognitive Abilities Test or the Highly Capable Program, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen A. Morrison". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kathleen Morrison  
Director of Elementary Learning Support