



# Discovery Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the Discovery Program?

The Discovery Program serves exceptionally intelligent elementary students whose needs may not be easily met in the general education classroom. This full time program is designed to reflect challenges most suited for intellectually gifted students with very high levels of achievement. It uses a variation of the multi-age model to teach students in grades 3-5 in two classrooms.

### 2. How does the Discovery Program differ from the general education classroom?

Like all Tahoma classrooms, The Discovery Program teaches the district curriculum, which emphasizes thinking skills, Habits of Mind, and student choice. In the Discovery Program, pacing is more rapid, activities are more rigorous, and students are expected to demonstrate high-level qualities of self-directed learners. The program emphasizes enrichment activities that extend the thinking skills and academic acceleration of the intellectually gifted child.

### 3. Where is the Discovery Program located?

The Discovery Program is located in one district elementary school, currently Shadow Lake. Transportation for students from other schools is provided by district transfer buses.

### 4. How are students identified for the Discovery Program?

Tahoma School District uses state-required identification procedures:

- The district advertises the nomination period in late autumn each year. During the nomination period, any person may nominate a child in grades 2, 3, or 4 for the next year's Discovery Program.
- Families of nominated students are notified of Discovery testing procedures, which take place at each elementary school during the school day.
- All nominated students are assessed using the Cognitive Abilities Test, or CogAT. A cut score determines which students will progress to the achievement test (ITBS).
- The selection committee, including teachers as well as an administrator and psychologist, meets to determine which students will be invited to enroll in the following year's program.

### 5. Why are two tests required?

For success in the Discovery Program, a student must have high levels of both cognitive ability and academic achievement. The CogAT score indicates the student's level of cognitive development. Because the Discovery Program is intended for students who have extremely high capability in this area, this test is an effective measure for identifying eligible students. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills measures students' reading comprehension and math computation skills. The Discovery Program requires fluency with both of these, since the students' work will not only be highly complex, but also at an accelerated pace.

### 6. What opportunities will Highly Capable students find after elementary school?

In Middle School, identified students may take part in the Honors Enrichment Project and advanced math placement. In Junior High, students may apply for Honors and accelerated courses in multiple subject areas. In High School, students may select from a variety of advanced, accelerated, and college-level courses.

### 7. What if I have additional questions?

Please contact Kristin Edlund in the Department of Teaching and Learning at 425-413-3400.

