



Cascadia FAQ's

- 1. Do Cascadia kids really get to go directly into 8th grade math at Hamilton (and JAMS and RESMS)?**

Yes. Cascadia 5th graders study 7th grade math, so 8th grade math would be the next course in sequence for many students. This is true at Hamilton, Jane Addams, and Robert Eagle Staff. For neighborhood schools, check with the middle school principal if they offer 2 years ahead math all the way through 8th grade or not.

- 2. Can HC students at [any neighborhood school] test into higher math levels at Hamilton? My [child's] teacher has him in an advanced math group.**

Kids coming from a Seattle Public School that is a neighborhood school must take the next course in sequence (i.e., 6th grade math in 6th grade). There is no option to test into higher math levels. There are options for a combined year in the 7th grade for 7th and 8th grade math in order to take Algebra 1 in the 8th grade.

Please refer to this website for more questions regarding math courses available to HC students enrolled at an HCC school, and students (HC or not) enrolled at neighborhood or other option schools:

<https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/mathematics/course-progressions/transition-from-elementary-to-middle-school-math/>

- 3. If my kid doesn't qualify for HCC this year, can they still transfer into Cascadia if they qualify in a year or two?**

Yes – students are able to transfer to Cascadia as long as there is a grade cohort for them to transfer into.

- 4. My kid qualified, but I would like to wait a year to see what enrichment [neighborhood school] has to offer, can I move her the following year?**

Yes. See above answer.

5. Is there a chance that there will be another first grade cohort class? (In 2024-2025)

We do not know. The district has not given us any updated information on how the proposed changes will happen.

6. My 5th grader qualified. Can I transfer to Cascadia mid-year?

Enrollment typically doesn't allow mid-year changes of school. Check with Advanced Learning and Enrollment if you have unusual circumstances.

7. The PTA told us Cascadia kids will just get transferred back to [neighborhood school] in a few years when HCC is dissolved. Is that true? I don't want to send my kid just to have her transferred back in a year.

The district has told our school principal that all students enrolled in the HC program at Cascadia will be able to stay at Cascadia through 5th grade.

8. The district press release said West Woodland was launching a pilot program for advanced learning in 2nd and 4th grades this year. I don't see any enrichment opportunities happening. Is that launching next year? Did they scrap the program?

The Cascadia PTA has not heard about the pilot programs at other schools. Please contact your neighborhood school's administration to see how and if this is implemented.

9. When and how did the kids get screened? We haven't heard anything from the teacher.

Please see the Cascadia website for the process
<https://cascadiaes.seattleschools.org/resources/advanced-learning/>

10. The email from [Principal] seems to say that we'd be hearing soon if our kid was recommended for AL or HC, but I haven't heard anything about anything. Do I need to do anything?

I would contact Advanced Learning.

11. The structure of [Principal] email seemed to say that MAP testing for kinder might indicate whether or not they are eligible for advanced learning or HCC - is that correct?

That is correct, plus other measures including the DIBELS reading assessment. Please visit the universal screening website for details for each grade:

<https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/advanced-learning/identification-and-eligibility/universal-screening-information/>

- 12. Are they automatically disqualified if they didn't get to take the MAP test in January? Kelly told me that not taking the test wouldn't affect my son in any way. My kid is advanced in math and reading, but I never received an email asking for permission for AL or HC. Who should I contact?**

My understanding is that an additional testing date was provided. Check with Advanced Learning.

- 13. Can I appeal if they never even considered my kid? I think his teacher just isn't a fan.**

Yes. Check the Advanced Learning website for appeal information.

- 14. I am curious about the timeline since the Cascadia open houses are in April and the MAP testing is in May. So we'd have to be interested now, before the MAP testing would confirm eligibility?**

MAP testing happens a few times during the year. Choice forms are due in mid-February, generally. You can submit a form prior to eligibility (in the event your child is found eligible), or you can submit the form later in the year. Contact the Advanced Learning Department for timelines.

- 15. Once we find out that our kid qualifies, how long do we have to decide between the schools? I heard somewhere that we only get a week to decide.**

Advanced Learning did give families a short time window this year to confirm they want HC eligibility, however that doesn't change your child's school. You should accept the eligibility because it gives you more options in the future. Once your child has been HC identified, you may use the school choice process to choose Cascadia or your designated HC school until 5/31. If you don't elect to move your child, they keep the HC designation and may move to Cascadia later (though not mid-year). HC designations are kept as long as you remain in an SPS school (or one year if you leave SPS). Your child is eligible for services the entire time they are at Seattle Schools.

- 16. I was planning to keep my HC qualified daughter at [neighborhood school], but I am just now learning that she won't be able to take 8th grade math in [middle school] unless I move her. That is a deal breaker for us. Is it too late to sign her up for fall? Or did we miss the open enrollment window?**

You can submit a school choice form through the end of May per <https://www.seattleschools.org/enroll/about-our-schools/school-choice/>

Kids going into middle school from their neighborhood school can take 8th grade math in 8th grade (for a few neighborhood school graduates, the option is available in the 7th grade), but they will not be able to take 8th grade math in the 6th grade with the option to take Geometry in the 8th grade.

Example Math Progressions and *Acceleration Possibilities

5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
Grade 5 Math	Math 6	Math 7	Math 8	Algebra 1	Geo	Algebra 2	Precalc
Grade 5 Math	Math 6	Math 7	Math 8	Algebra 1	Geo	Algebra 2	AP Stat
Grade 5 Math	Math 6	Math 7	Math 8	Algebra 1	Geo	Algebra 2	College in the High School
Grade 5 Math	Math 6	* Math 7/8	Algebra 1	Geo	Algebra 2	Precalc	AP Calculus
Grade 5 Math	Math 6	Math 7	Math 8	Algebra 1	* Geo & Algebra 2	IB HL	IB HL

This is not an exhaustive list | Acceleration and course options vary by school *Acceleration

Example Math Progressions

5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
Math 7	Math 8	Algebra 1	Geo	Algebra 2	CIHS Precal	AP Calc AB	AP Stat
Math 7	Math 8	Algebra 1	Geo	Algebra 2	IB HL	IB HL	Running Start
Math 7	Math 8	Algebra 1	Geo	Algebra 2	AP Stat	AP Comp Sci	Running Start
Math 7	Math 8	Algebra 1	Geo	Algebra 2	Honors Precal	AP Calc BC	AP Stat

This is not an exhaustive list | Course options vary by school

<https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/mathematics/course-progressions/mathematics-frequently-asked-questions/>

17. I want to make sure my kid likes Cascadia, but we can't make the tours. Can I arrange a time to show her the campus?

We have added new dates. Please register for the during the school day tours here: <https://cascadiaes.seattleschools.org/news/welcome-prospective-families/>

You can find other dates for information on the above website as well as PTA sponsored events and informationals here: <https://cascadiapta.org/events/>

18. How will the district budget cuts affect Cascadia? Are they going to have to cut the ILabs program? Or Shakespeare? Or instrumental music?

There is not a simple answer to these questions. Of course, SPS budget cuts affect all schools, but mitigating the effects of these cuts is currently a priority for the Cascadia PTA.

19. How does the school foster leadership skills?

We have a variety of leadership programs – our students give tours to prospective parents, students in higher grades mentor new students, students help lead and plan our community meetings, and more. Moreover, Principal Sandra Mackey has expressed her intent to give kids “ownership” opportunities.

20. Will there still be bussing to Cascadia next year?

Yes. Anyone in the Cascadia service area is eligible for bussing, unless you live in the walk zone (within a mile of the school). Map of the Cascadia service area: <https://www.seattleschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ES-HCC-pathways.pdf> Bus assignments (bus number, stop location, and time) are not made until late August.

21. Which after-care programs can my kid ride the bus to?

This year ILS picks kids up in their van. In the past Emerald City Karate has picked up kids in vans. This year and in past years we know of kids taking the yellow bus to: Boys & Girls Club – North Seattle, Boys & Girls Club – Ballard, Boys & Girls Club – Wallingford, ILS – Greenwood, Phinney Neighborhood Center (a few after care programs including YMCA), and Washington Karate Academy. There might be more. KidsCo also offers on-site after care until 6PM.

22. How do you get two kids to two different schools that start at the same time?

It can be hard, but the use of the yellow bus for the Cascadia student can help a lot. Families also use carpools or drop a child off for supervised play (generally starting at 7:40AM at most Seattle elementary schools that start at 7:55) at one school and then rush the other child to school in time for the bell – this is the hardest part for most families and generally manageable, with support from the community.

23. Is there a choir at Cascadia?

No. We do have a general music class, and singing is part of it.

24. Will my child still have an opportunity to learn Spanish if I switch her to Cascadia? That is very important to our family.

We hope to have Spanish available during our after school programs, but after school programming is not fixed.

25. How diverse is Cascadia?

Basic demographic data can be found on the OSPI report card site by clicking 'Enrollment'.

(<https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/105540>). Cascadia's diversity, equity and inclusion work also extends to LGBTQIA+ students and families as well as neurodivergent students and family members.

26. Are the kids loud and out of control at Cascadia? I have heard that most kids there have ADHD. My kid can't handle loud or out of control classrooms. She is not 2e. Do you think she will be happy there?

Students at Cascadia are students with feelings and behaviors like any other student in the district; classrooms reflect a diversity of learning styles and needs. Cascadia teachers are trained in and classrooms employ Universal Designed Learning in the classroom (see comment above about inclusion) to help all students self-regulate and focus. Many parents whose children struggle with ADHD and other 2e (twice exceptional, meaning hi-cap and another neurodivergent diagnosis) diagnoses find symptoms improve when they are engaged academically and taught at an appropriate level. In fact, some students we think of as ADHD might actually be bored and acting out – this is one reason Hi-Cap supporters advocate for universal screening.

27. My kid has moderate autism, can they get support at Cascadia? Is there an Access program? Friendship circles? What else do they offer?

There is no Access program. We have a Resource program with special education teachers and assistants – you should contact the school to determine if Cascadia can meet your child's needs.

28. What are the special ed services like at Cascadia?

We have a Resource program with Special Ed Teachers who work with specific students or classes at specified times.

29. What grades are kids able to take a musical instrument? What instruments are available?

Next year all 5th graders, and some 4th graders (as space allows), will be able to learn a musical instrument. Instruments and teachers are determined by the district. Generally this includes: violin, viola, cello, clarinet, flute, trumpet.

30. Can I move back to [neighborhood school] mid year if my kid decides he isn't happy at Cascadia?

This depends on the space available at the neighborhood school. You must work with the district to do this.

31. Is it better to move my child to Cascadia now or in a few years?

In general, friend groups become more tight-knit and harder to leave as kids grow older and the jump in math can be more difficult in the higher grades. However, we have students who move over in every grade and they are able to make friends and be socially happy at Cascadia. We also support kids as they get up to grade level with the math.

32. Is there homework at Cascadia?

Cascadia has a no homework policy. Some projects in higher grades require work over the course of days or weeks at home and sometimes kids who do not finish an assignment during the school day are asked to complete it at home.

33. Are the kids at Cascadia under a lot of pressure? Are they stressed?

Cascadia operates as any other public elementary school, with a full complement of age-appropriate learning, enrichment, and social activities. Students have three recesses a day, lunch, they rotate between academic lessons, SEL (social emotional learning) lessons, and our specialists – PE, music, art, and library. They go on field trips, have playdates with friends, play games, read books, etc. As noted above, there is a no homework policy.

While the pace of learning is accelerated a year ahead in ELA and two years ahead in Math, teachers and the school have resources to support all learners. Many students feel less “pressured” and “stressed” after the move to Cascadia as they are finally fully engaged in learning, taught at their level, and no longer have to try so hard to focus since school is no longer “boring” or “too easy” (although some kids are still bored and find aspects at Cascadia too easy – these are still elementary school kids, after all). Some parents and teachers don’t fully appreciate how hard (and lonely) it can be for kids to be in a classroom in which they are not engaged.

34. Is SEL a big part of the curriculum at Cascadia? That is the most important thing to us, but our child is bored and not learning at her current school.

Yes. All classes and grades have SEL lessons. The school brings in providers for assemblies about SEL issues and offers in-class lessons to emphasize topics from the assembly.

35. How is bullying handled at Cascadia? Do kids get into fights a lot? Do kids get teased?

Again, Cascadia experiences the same social dynamics of any elementary school. At Cascadia, teachers and staff employs restorative justice techniques to help kids learn and move forward from adverse situations. SEL lessons in class provide models and language to help kids get along and manage disagreements. Cascadia kids are just kids, and issues are handled by staff. For specific issues or questions you should contact the school staff.

36. How hard is the transition for kids? Do we need to get [our student] a tutor? Will the teachers help [our student] get up to speed in math? Are there math tutors for the kids who just moved over?

Because of the high number of new students each year and summer learning loss, teachers spend the first few weeks of school getting caught up and assessing where kids are in math. Some students will receive additional support from the math specialist. Cascadia teachers and parents can recommend a range of resources that families use to help students get up to the accelerated grade level in math (ranging from free to some cost). The school also uses IXL in class and students will have access to that online learning tool once school starts to practice at home, if they wish.

Every summer, Cascadia staff puts together a math ramp-up guide to reduce summer learning loss as well as provide a framework for new students to refer to (as an example, there’s a recommendation that incoming second graders should be fact fluent in the multiplication table from 0x0 up to 10x10).

37. How do you get to know the other families/set up playdates when everyone lives all over the place?

The PTA helps families host playdates by grade and neighborhood over the summer so kids can start to get to know each other. The PTA also puts together a directory (arranged by class and bus route) to help students make outside of school plans and carpools. The PTA also hosts game nights, movie nights, and other activities (e.g., harvest festival, culture night, science fair) to allow students and families chances to get to know each other.

38. What percentage of Cascadia kids end up going to Hamilton?

Students at Cascadia are zoned for Eagle Staff, JAMS, and Hamilton HCC Pathway Schools. Most students end up going to those schools, so roughly 30%. Some families choose to send their student(s) to their neighborhood Middle School pathway (e.g. Eckstein, Whitman), K-8 Middle school, or independent school.