

**Why should gifted students be placed in a cluster group instead of being assigned to all classes?**

- Gifted students:
  - need to spend time learning with others of like ability to experience challenge and make academic progress, and
  - better understand their learning differences when they are with like-ability peers.
- Teachers are more likely to differentiate curriculum when there is a group of gifted students in their classroom.

**What are the learning needs of gifted students?**

- *All* students deserve consistent opportunities to learn new material. With gifted students, this means having opportunities to engage in intellectually stimulating endeavors that go beyond grade-level curriculum.
- Regardless of how they are structured, all programs for gifted learners must provide:
  - Flexible grouping
  - Curriculum differentiation
  - Continuous progress
  - Intellectual peer interaction
  - Continuity
  - Teachers with specialized training in gifted education

**Why not create small groups of gifted students in *all* classes?**

Desired academic outcomes become greatly diminished when doing so because:

- Teachers have students with a range of abilities that is too broad.
- There are no opportunities for gifted-education leadership at the grade level.
- There is less accountability for teachers to facilitate progress of their gifted learners.
- Teachers feel a decreased need to identify gifted students.
- Students' learning needs are less apparent.
- Providing appropriate teacher training becomes difficult.

**Won't the creation of a gifted-cluster group rob the other classes of academic leadership? Aren't gifted students needed in all classes so they can help others learn?**

- All classes have a group of gifted students *or* a group of high-achieving students, so every class has academic leaders.
- High-achieving students have new opportunities to become academic leaders.
- Gifted students make intuitive leaps and, therefore, do not always appear to have to work as hard as others. This means that gifted students are not always the best academic leaders for other students.

**Will the presence of gifted students in the classroom inhibit the learning for other students?**

- Not when the gifted cluster is kept to a manageable size. Recommended gifted-cluster size is 20%, or 4-9 students.
- New academic leadership is present in all classes, which actually raises the numbers of high achievers in the classrooms and the school.
- When learning extension opportunities are offered to all students in the class, expectations and levels of learning rise for all.

**Are gifted-cluster groups "visible" in the classroom?**

- Gifted-cluster groups are rarely distinguishable from other groups of students in the classroom.
- *All* students move in and out of groupings according to interest, ability, and pace regarding different topics.

**What are some advantages of cluster grouping?**

- Grouping all gifted children in a regular classroom provides social, emotional, and academic advantages to students.
- Students
  - Learn that ability is not diminished by struggle
  - Value individual differences
  - Become more motivated to learn
  - Receive credit for material already mastered
- Teachers can focus instruction to better meet all their students' academic needs.
- Achievement rises for most students.
- Schools provide full-time gifted services with little additional cost.
- Gifted ELL students are more likely to receive advanced instruction and extended learning opportunities.

**What unique qualities should a gifted-cluster teacher have?**

- Understand, respect, and enjoy teaching gifted students
- Effectively challenge gifted students in the classroom
- Decrease the use of whole-group instruction
- Encourage a student-centered approach and learning environment
- Participate in gifted professional development
- Recognize gifted potential in all populations
- Pay attention to students' social-emotional needs
- Compact and differentiate required grade-level standards
- Form flexible learning groups
- Integrate basic skills and higher-order thinking skills
- Create and use learning extensions
- Use appropriate assessments and grading practices
- Develop students' abilities to self-direct
- Build effective parent-teacher partnerships
- Have a good sense of humor