

Frequently Asked Questions about School Based Cluster Grouping

What is the School Based Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM)?

In the SCGM, gifted children at each grade level are clustered together into an otherwise mixed ability classroom with a designated gifted-cluster teacher. This program allows the gifted student to be with both age and ability peers throughout the school day. Gifted-cluster teachers provide differentiated instruction or extend learning opportunities as determined by the needs of the student.

How is the SCGM teacher being trained?

Gifted-cluster teachers receive specialized, ongoing training in the areas of gifted education and differentiated instruction – special teaching strategies for modifying curriculum, content and the learning environment to meet the needs of gifted students. This training prepares the teachers with an understanding of how gifted children learn and gives them the tools they need to provide appropriate teaching strategies for their gifted students. The district’s Gifted Services Coordinator and the Director of Teaching and Learning serve as resources and support for gifted-cluster teachers.

What is clustering?

Clustering is defined by Dr. Karen Rogers as “the identification and placement of the top group of gifted or high performing students in the same grade level in one class with a teacher who is trained to work with them and devotes proportional class time to differentiating for them.”

What is differentiation?

Differentiation is defined by Dr. Diane Heacox as “...changing the pace, level, or kind of instruction [a teacher provides] in response to individual learners’ needs, styles, or interests.”

Is the SCGM a pull-out program?

SCGM is a classroom-based initiative that allows students to work with other age and ability peers throughout the school day. It is not a pull-out program.

Will my elementary school child need to be retested upon entering middle school?

No, once a child is identified the designation remains.

How is D110 meeting the needs of high achieving students?

District 110 uses a variety of techniques to provide differentiated learning opportunities to all students. Some of these techniques include:

- Flexible grouping strategies
- Guided reading groups (primary level)
- Literature circle groups (intermediate/middle level)
- Tiered assignments or learning activities
- High order thinking skills

If my child did not qualify for gifted services placement, may he or she be re-evaluated?

A student may be evaluated for gifted services placement a total of three times during his or her elementary and middle school tenure. In order to ensure accurate and valid results D110 must wait one year between testing sessions.