

GATE Advisory Council Re-cap

1/6/2011

Cluster Grouping:

Beginning in 6th grade, the current GATE plan calls for grouping clusters of 5 GATE students in English language arts, mathematics, and science courses.

Principals shared that there are challenges to forming clusters as conflicts arise in the master schedule that prevent clustering. It is also the case that many clusters occur naturally as the GATE students tend to be taking the same courses (e.g. advanced math)

The middle school shared that 3 GATE students were clustered in each 6th grade core this year. Parents questioned whether or not this was in keeping with the goal of clustering in groups of 5.

One member suggested that the school inquire of parents whether or not clustering was a priority for their child's schedule when the school obtains student interests for classes each semester.

Principal Valdez, from Beach elementary, shared a clustering pilot that was occurring in 4th grade this year. Some of the challenges for clustering students at the elementary level include small number of classrooms at some grade levels and the fact that sometimes pairing GATE students with one another is not the best match.

Principals and teachers expressed a continued commitment to continuing to review how we can best formulate classes with the needs of GATE students in mind.

The group also discussed the communications that occur between the school and parents once a student is found to be GATE eligible. The elementary sites shared a differentiation plan that teachers complete and send to parents. Parents indicated that this was a model that they would like to be implemented more widely.