

BMMS GATE Parent Meeting Homogeneous-Heterogeneous:

What's difference, and what's the right choice
for *your* child?

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What is the best environment for your child?

- **Purpose:** To present information regarding the middle school GATE program and the options for Homogeneous or Heterogeneous grouping
- **Options:**
 - **Homogeneous:** Students are placed in a Humanities class with *only district identified gifted students*. (Not available in Academy.)
 - **Heterogeneous/cluster:** *A cluster of gifted or provisionally identified as gifted students* in a Humanities class. (Available to both Academy and non-Academy students.)

Considerations:

- Differences between Academy and Homogeneous grouping
- Social aspects of groupings
- Stress: competitiveness and motivation
- Personality meshing in groupings
- Stigma of being labeled GATE in middle school
- Curricular concerns: rigor, differentiation, expectations and standards
- Choice: best interest of student versus wishes of parents
- Need for student, parent, and teacher input and collaboration in the decision-making process
- Gifted areas primarily addressed: language arts/social studies versus math/science.
- Underachieving gifted students
- Special needs of children
- Conflicts with other classes and choices

PUSD Goals for Gifted Students

Each student is expected to meet or exceed grade level standards in the core subjects of language arts and mathematics, showing continual progress throughout time.

Additionally, all GATE students should be encouraged and supported to demonstrate the following:

- Skills
- Attitude
- Knowledge

Skills, Attitude, Knowledge

SKILLS:

- Perform at or above grade level in all basic skills areas (including technology and research skills)
- Continue to progress in all content areas, regardless of current level
- Use critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Develop strong communication skills
- Utilize strong organization, time management, and study skills

ATTITUDES:

- Possess an enthusiasm for learning
- Display academic independence (self-directed, resourceful, & confidence)
- Be willing to take risks
- Be tolerant of self and others
- Demonstrate leadership ability, particularly in the area of personal expertise

KNOWLEDGE:

- Apply skills and knowledge in area(s) of expertise
- Become self aware and accept both areas of giftedness and areas of weakness
- Expand exploration in all content areas
- Be prepared for advanced instruction at the secondary level

Student Opportunities

- Odyssey of the Mind
- Science Olympiad
- Quiz Bowl
- Spelling Bee
- Reflections Program
- Robotics Team
- Math Team
- Peer to Peer Tutoring (8th grade)

ALL EXTENSIONS OF LEARNING ARE OPTIONAL

Parent Opportunities

- PUSD Parenting Workshops
<https://powayusd.com/en-US/Departments/Student-Support-Services/Active-Parenting>
- Social Emotional Needs of the Gifted Webinars www.sengifted.org
- SD City Schools archived *Distinguished Lecture Series* – www.sandi.net
- [Poway Unified School District GATE webpage](http://www.powayusd.com/en-US/Departments/Learning-Support/GATE/GATE)
<http://www.powayusd.com/en-US/Departments/Learning-Support/GATE/GATE>

Which is right for your child?

Homogeneous	Heterogeneous
<p><u>Accelerated</u> learning: due to ability of gifted learners to move more quickly through content</p>	<p>Moderate pacing allows for all ability levels to excel</p>
<p>Class discussions tend to have more depth and complexity, due in part to students' ability for inferential, critical reasoning</p>	<p>Depth of discussion relates to range of abilities within class</p>
<p>Learning pace is quicker: therefore more opportunities to work ahead of the curve and/or go deeper into content</p>	<p>Opportunities for leadership and academic achievement <u>beyond</u> the norm of a regular class of learners</p>
<p>Discussions involve more advanced vocabulary, syntax, and complex structures due to learners' understanding of the subtleties of language, humor, plot development, concepts and their connections</p>	<p><u>Strong differentiation</u> used to provide consistent opportunities to learn at appropriate level of challenge.</p>
<p>Competitive environment: high expectations set <u>by</u> learners within class, rather than only the teacher</p>	<p>Safer, less threatening environment: academically not as competitive</p>
<p>Peers are similar in academic ability; creates a sense of security as well as challenge</p>	<p>Ability to interact with academic peers as well as students of varied learning abilities and strengths</p>

Comparisons of Options

	Homogeneous	Academy	Cluster
Student Composition	Only district-identified GATE students	Regular ed students, cluster of GATE, RSP, or AVID students	Regular ed students, cluster of GATE, RSP, or AVID students
Positive Aspects	Due to similar intellectual capabilities, often more peer acceptance, greater sense of security, and deeper exploration of issues and topics	Strong sense of community and group identity; Motivation to learn is strong; More instructional time for math	Less competitive than homogeneous grouping
Selection Process	Request each year (drawing if number requested exceeds number available)	Application and drawing, just for first year	Placement in GATE cluster based on request, drawing, or district or provisional gifted status
Standards and Skills	Grade level standards and skills: differentiation	Grade level standards and skills: differentiation; additional time for math	Grade level standards and skills: differentiation
Physical Environment	Students only grouped homogeneously in Humanities: Language Arts and Social Studies	Gifted clusters in Humanities, but tend to move together because of scheduling of Academy classes	Gifted clusters in Humanities, mixed ability in other classes
Learning Environment	Differentiation to meet the varied needs of a range of gifted learners; Rigor: differentiation	Differentiation to provide appropriate challenge; Rigor: differentiation	Differentiation to provide appropriate challenge; Rigor: differentiation

Application for Homogeneous Class Placement, 2019-2020

- Applications available on the BMMS website under the GATE program
- Applications due February 6th by 3:00pm to the BMMS front office
- Connect Ed will be sent to the current 6th and 7th graders to let them know they have been placed in March

Thank you!

Questions?