

Gifted Screening and the K-6 SCGM FAQ

Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM) in FHPS

The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM) in FHPS provides a comprehensive way to serve gifted students on a full-time basis while enhancing achievement opportunities for all students. The information on this page answers common questions about SCGM and gifted testing.

What is the definition of gifted in Forest Hills Public Schools?

Our definition relates to gifted individuals' processes, how they interact with the learning environment, how they perceive information and how they manipulate ideas. Our gifted model focuses on global thought processes while emphasizing enriched and accelerated content. When we identify students with our assessments, it provides evidence of the student's advanced ability to learn. General ability allows people to solve problems, reason, find patterns, make inferences, and analyze simple and complex ideas.

What are the learning needs of gifted students?

All students deserve consistent opportunities to learn new material at high levels. With gifted students, this means having opportunities to engage in intellectually stimulating endeavors that may go beyond or deeper into grade-level curriculum.

What does it mean to place students in “cluster” groups?

A group of gifted-identified students is placed (“clustered”) into a mixed-ability classroom with a teacher who receives professional learning to differentiate curriculum and instruction for gifted students.

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Will the creation of a gifted-cluster group impact other classes' academic leadership?

All classes will 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.

Is cluster grouping the same as tracking?

To answer this, it's important to know the definition of "tracking." Tracking is a practice of sorting students in groups and keeping them in the group without movement. It gained popularity in the mid-twentieth century when schools were sorting students for vocational, general or academic tracks to prepare for the working class jobs, skilled careers or university attendance. Curriculum was based on the ability of average students in the class. Schoolwide Cluster Grouping will attend to the needs of the gifted student and all others, allowing students to move in and out of classroom groups based on readiness, interest, and need. With the precision of grouping students, all classes will have a balanced range of abilities, assuring high expectations for every student.

What is the process for having my child tested?

Parents and teachers may register students for gifted testing. FHPS students are tested using a group-administered, nonverbal, ability assessment in the spring. Our nonverbal test features pictorial direction and requires no spoken or written language. Students in grades K-5 may be registered for testing.

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What scores are needed to qualify for gifted education services?

To qualify for gifted education services in FHPS, students must score in the 96th percentile or in the 9th stanine on the district's ability test or on an approved full-scale IQ test. FHPS students may test twice in grades K-5.

For what reasons would I consider outside testing?

Some parents/guardians choose private testing by a trained psychologist when they are seeking a broader understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of a child, or if they believe that individual testing would be more appropriate for their child.

What if I don't feel testing at my child's current grade level is appropriate at this time? May I request testing for another year?

Yes. You may request testing for your child at the grade level you feel is most appropriate. It's important to keep in mind that we test students in grades K-5, once a year, during the months of March and April. Registration will be available on our web page in January 2025.

If my child does not qualify for gifted education services, can they retest at another time?

Test administration guidelines require that 12 months pass before the same test is administered again. It is generally recommended to wait two years before retesting. If a student scores in the 85th - 95th percentile, parents and teachers may consider retesting in the future. In FHPS, students may test twice during their K-5 experience. Retesting a child more than twice usually does not provide significantly different results.

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My child scored in the 60th percentile. Does that mean he/she failed the test?

Students do not “pass” nor “fail” an ability test. The percentile rank means that a student did as well or better than 60 percent of the students at the same age.

Who provides the testing? How will I receive the results?

The Gifted Services Coordinator for FHPS administers testing in all the schools.

The Instruction Office oversees the evaluation and reporting process.

Parents/guardians are notified of results by a letter sent via US Mail. The students' home schools receive the same information in order to provide appropriate educational placements.

May I request that my child be given a specific ability test?

Students have the opportunity to take a nonverbal ability test. When families ask to test their child for the second time, the district's Gifted Services Coordinator might recommend a different ability test **based on the results of the nonverbal test**. This recommendation might be appropriate if the student scores in the 85th-95th percentile on the first test.

What if we are new to the district?

We have a placement protocol for new families. Your new student **may** be placed in the gifted cluster classroom at FHPS if one of the following is present:

- A letter that indicates the previous school has placed the child in a gifted model or received gifted services.
- Previous gifted testing was complete and there are qualifying scores from an **approved test**.

If you do not meet one of the above items, we offer testing in the spring each year.

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Please reach out with questions to our Gifted Coordinator, Tara Steele, by emailing tsteele@fhps.net.