

Frequently Asked Questions about the Middle School Placement Process

How is placement determined at the end of fourth grade?

All students in the Explore program for 4th grade and students brought up for review by their 4th grade LA and or Math teacher are screened, given assessments that show their performance and reviewed for 5th grade placement. This screening process begins after the Spring NWEA is given. A placement matrix is filled out which has the following elements:

CogAT score-Cognitive Skills

NWEA-Performance

Professional Judgment from the current teacher

Performance assessments

If additional information is needed, the Director might ask for additional work samples to evaluate performance levels or the Director can order additional tests if needed.

What if my child did poorly on the NWEA and or the CogAT but I believe that my child needs to be in the gifted program?

All placement decisions are supported by several data pieces so that no one test is cause for placement. It is the determination of the Quest Committee and the current teachers of the student to go through the process and determine if additional tests or additional supportive work materials will be used to support a more rigorous placement. Parents are welcome to contact the Director of Gifted during this process to discuss placement and they can ask any additional questions they might have. The Director can reorder an NWEA assessment and/or a WISC can be ordered to replace a CogAT score. The Director would reorder those assessments during the screening time if the student showed great aptitude, abstract thinking and the classroom teacher assessment with data would support the need for more information.

Why do some students not qualify for Quest if they scored high on the NWEA Language Arts/Math test?

NWEA measures how well a student has learned particular concepts related to our benchmarks but it does not account for abstract or analytical thinking which is the foundation of our gifted program. It is a good screener to begin the process, but it must be used in conjunction with cognitive skills and classroom performance.

What should I do if I have questions about my child's current placement?

First you should always contact the current classroom teacher first to go over your child's performance. You can share your feelings to why you feel your child is not

placed in the correct class. If after that conversation you still feel that way and want to discuss placement, contact Colleen Brueggeman the Director of Gifted. She will review the placement decision, discuss your concerns and develop a plan to address your concerns.

Why are there so many different classes offered at DeerPath?

We understand that the pacing and or rigor of what students need differs so we want to be able to provide additional classes that have different pacing and/or rigor. Please keep in mind that we have developed these programs around the needs of students so that there is a great fit for each student. The classes were not developed to track students in a particular pacing of classes. This is why we review student placement each year and continue to gather data on students as they develop. If the needs of a student change so will their class placements. Many advanced students in both Math/LA will be recommended for Honors classes at the high school. Advanced students who continue into Advanced Algebra/Trigonometry Honors at LFHS their freshman year can still take AP Honors Calculus and receive college credit before they graduate LFHS.

Do the Elementary Teachers Communicate with the Middle School Teachers Regarding Placement?

Yes. There are several district meetings set up to discuss curriculum, needs of students and individual placements. There is also a screening meeting per elementary building that is set up to discuss individual placement, matrix scores and any additional information that will be needed. The Quest Committee that shares placement decision making, is comprised of elementary and middle school staff members.

What is the Difference between the Advanced Plus Math-Quest and Advanced-Quest LA in 5th Grade?

Advanced Plus Math and Quest Math use the same textbook however, Quest has a large visual math component and moves at a faster rate. Advanced LA and Quest LA have a parallel curriculum, however they have different vocabulary programs and they move at a different rate.

