

CGA Middle School GT Learner Panel - FAQs

On Thursday, April 10, 2014, the Coppell Gifted Association held a special event at Coppell High School where elementary school learners and their parents could listen to the experience of CISD 8th grade learners representing all three CISD Middle School Campuses as they described the academic, social, and extra-curricular choices they made throughout their middle school careers. Below are the questions collected that evening which require a response from an administrator.

Q: Which course is more challenging? GT or Pre-AP?

A: Learners who are identified GT enroll in GT and Pre-AP courses. Learning is designed in both of those courses around the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). All learners in a GT course are identified Gifted and Talented. In those self-contained GT courses, there may be increased depth and complexity in content coverage and/or an increased pace in content coverage.

Q: What is Pre-AP?

A: One of the most commonly identified Advanced Academics pathways in high school is Advanced Placement (AP) courses. While not formally acknowledged by the College Board, pre-AP courses are designed to align with and prepare learners for the rigor of AP courses when they are in high school.

Q: If a learner is in GT in elementary school, should he or she retake the GT assessments to be in GT middle school courses?

A: Learners do not need to “retest” once they are identified Gifted and Talented in order to participate in the continuum of services offered to GT learners. In CISD, learners are typically identified in Kindergarten, Third Grade and Fifth Grade.

Parents and learners should review multiple data points (including but not limited to the Cogat score from 5th grade) to determine which middle school courses will best meet their academic needs.

Q: What are endorsements? Are they for middle school or high school?

A: House Bill 5 (HB5) requires learners entering high school to declare a pathway or “endorsement” in high school that ultimately results in that learner enrolling in and completing a coherent sequences of four elective courses designed to introduce the learner to a career interest.

Q: How many electives do learners have in middle school?

A: Most learners will have a total of 7 electives in middle school and one “Endorsement Exploration” course designed to prepare learners to declare their endorsement at the end of their 8th grade year. (See above for more about endorsements.)

Q: If a learner is identified Gifted and Talented in one strand (example: science/mathematics), does that mean that learner can only take GT courses in that track?

Learners identified Gifted and Talented can choose to enroll in any GT course regardless of the content, however, learners and their parents should consider which GT courses might be *most* appropriate for meeting their academic needs.

Q: What is the best balance of GT/Pre-AP/on-level courses for a learner entering the 6th grade? How will those choices impact the courses s/he enrolls in for 7th grade?

Learners identified GT should plan on enrolling in *at least* one GT course each year while in middle school. The best balance of GT/Pre-AP and on-level courses for each learner is really an individual decision. Consider interest, areas of strength and commitment to the level of rigor of the course when making that decision with your learner.