

Sample Grid for Total School Cluster Grouping Model

Rather than the complete range of abilities from low to high found in most classrooms, the cluster model approach to grouping students used at RSIS allows classrooms to reflect a more limited range of abilities. A cluster grid of a grade level may look something similar to this:

Cluster Category	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	Classroom 4	Classroom 5	Totals
High	10	10	0	0	0	20
High-Average	0	0	7	7	7	21
Average	10	10	10	9	10	49
Low-Average	6	0	8	10	0	24
Low	0	6	0	0	8	14
Sp.Ed (may be in any area)	0	2	2	2	2	8
GT (may be in any area)	7	6	4	4	4	25
Totals	26	26	25	26	25	128

School-Wide Cluster Grouping Benefits All Students

Narrowing the range of student achievement levels in a classroom allows more time for teachers to work with individual students or small groups. Cluster grouping has been found to be beneficial to students in that it allows students of similar achievement levels to work together and challenge each other. Cluster grouping reduces the range of students' achievement levels that must be addressed within the classrooms of all teachers.

For learners who demonstrate high academic ability, cluster grouping allows them the opportunity to compare themselves to their intellectual peers and form a more accurate perception of their own abilities. By not always being best or first academically, they learn to work, to fail, to strive for excellence, and they have others' high quality work with which to compare their own work. These elements are essential for high-ability students to learn to work to their potential. For students who are achieving at the average levels, removing the highest achievers from some classrooms allows other achievers to emerge and gain recognition. For students who are achieving at lower academic levels we are better able to provide additional support through special education services and/or small group tutoring from Educational Assistants.

Research tells us that over time, fewer students perform at the lower levels and more students achieve to higher levels. We look forward to providing students with opportunities for academic success with the Total School Cluster Grouping and Differentiation at RSIS.

REFERENCES

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