



Gateway Cluster Classroom



Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Which grades comprise Gateway classrooms?** Gateway serves highly gifted students in grades 3-5.
2. **Where is Gateway located?** Gateway is a Program-within-a-School, located at Valley Crossing Elementary School.
3. **How is a learning environment recommendation determined?**

As a request for their child's information to be reviewed for a learning environment recommendation for the next school year, parents submit a Gateway Interest Form to 833 Gifted Education.

Please see the deadline date and time listed on the website for this school year.

A Learning Environment Consideration Committee, consisting of highly trained gifted educators and administrators, thoroughly review each Gateway Interest Form submitted with the goal of understanding the gifted learner.

A learning environment recommendation is mailed to families **by the date listed on the website calendar.**

For a more detailed description of this process, please see [The Process of Learning Environment Recommendations](#) document available on the [833 Gifted Education](#) website.

4. **If my child also qualifies for special education services are they able to receive services at Gateway?** Yes. Students who are Twice Exceptional (identified for gifted and special education services) are welcome to submit an Interest Form. Gateway students receive special education services per their Individual Education Plan (IEP).
5. **How is instruction in a Gateway classroom different from a neighborhood school cluster classroom?** Because all of the students in the Gateway classroom are identified as gifted learners, instruction is planned and designed first from a gifted education lens. This instruction tends to include higher level questioning, thinking, and discussion. There is an emphasis on written communication and instruction with a focus on the use of technology and social interaction. Students participate in collaborative and project-based learning.
6. **If my child attends their neighborhood school cluster classroom, will he/she still receive gifted education instruction?** Yes. All of the elementary schools in South Washington County Schools provide gifted education to students using the cluster classroom model. A neighborhood school cluster classroom is a regular mainstream classroom in which a small group or cluster of students identified as gifted learners are placed. Cluster classroom teachers are selected and trained to work successfully with gifted students.
7. **Are Gateway students assigned extra homework?** The emphasis is not on more work for Gateway students, but on varied types of assignments aligned with student learning needs and interests. Students will receive guidance in developing self-directed learning skills such as time management and planning for completion of long-term projects. Students encounter more challenging work, which may result in more homework than previously experienced.
8. **Are class sizes different at Gateway?** The number of students per class is comparable to other District 833 classes in grades 3-5. District class size may vary between site and grade level.
9. **Is there a cost to attend Gateway?** No. As part of the public school system, there is no tuition cost to parents.
10. **Is transportation provided?** Yes. District-wide transportation exists for students who participate in Valley Crossing Gateway program. Families living outside of the district must provide their own transportation.
11. **How long is the bus ride?** That will depend on your proximity to Valley Crossing. In some cases, the bus ride has been as long as an hour.

- 12. Is there before and after school care for Gateway students and their siblings?** Yes. Kids Club is the School Age Child Care Program serving elementary students in District 833. Information about the program may be found at www.kidsclubonline.org.
- Registration for Kids Club begins in April, please check their website for exact dates.
 - Enrollment in Kids Club is based upon space availability and is not guaranteed.
 - If you have questions regarding care, you may contact Kids Club directly either via email at kidsclub@cecool.com or call Sherrie at 651-425-6637.
- 13. Is there a waiting list?** No. Although changes in classes seldom occur after the start of the school year, Interest Forms are kept on file and reevaluated should that happen.
- 14. If an Interest Form is submitted for third grade and a neighborhood school cluster classroom is the recommended learning environment, may we submit an Interest Form the following year for fourth grade?** Yes. A new Gateway Interest Form must be submitted for each school year.
- 15. If a student's learning environment is a Gateway cluster classroom, do we need to submit an Interest Form for the next school year?** No. Once a student begins learning in a Gateway cluster classroom he/she will continue to be placed in a Gateway cluster classroom for subsequent years.
- 16. What if a student decides Gateway is not a good fit? Can they go back to their neighborhood school cluster classroom?** Yes.
- 17. What about siblings?** Siblings may attend Valley Crossing through an intra-district transfer or open enrollment when space is available in the receiving grade level. Information and forms are available on the District 833 website. <http://www.sowashco.org>
- 18. What is the relationship of Gateway with the elementary school that houses it?** Gateway is a program-within-a-school that is integrated into the school community. Students share the same specialists (art, physical education, music, etc) and have the same principal. Students have recess and lunch with their grade level peers as well as participate in grade level events such as programs and field trips. The parents of Gateway students are encouraged to be part of the school PTA. This organization works to benefit all students in the building.
- 19. What happens to the Gateway students when they go to middle school?** There are four middle schools in South Washington County Schools. Gateway students will attend their boundary middle school where they will be placed together in a house with other students identified as gifted learners. In each core content area class, they are scheduled with cohorts of other gifted students. The teachers are trained to successfully work with gifted students. In addition, each middle school has a Gifted Education Coach on staff.
- 20. When are parents notified of their child's recommended learning environment?** Parents will be notified the middle of February for current 2nd and 3rd grade families and May for current 4th grade families. The exact date may be found on the Gifted Education Website.
- 21. Where can I get a Gateway Interest Form?** Gateway Interest Forms may be found on the Gifted Education website at Elementary - Gateway Program

