

Identification and Assessment of Giftedness

Frequently Asked Questions

Gifted and Talented Education in Atlanta Public Schools (APS) provides differentiated instruction for intellectually advanced and creatively gifted students. Gifted services are available in all traditional APS schools for students in grades 1-12.

For any child who is referred for gifted testing, APS is required by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to gather information in the following areas: Mental Ability, Achievement, Creativity, and Motivation. The instruments selected for each area and detailed below are GaDOE-approved and meet the guidelines of Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2.38.

What testing instruments may be used to determine if my child is eligible for Gifted Services?

During the testing process, the Gifted Eligibility Team may request your consent to administer one or more of the following instruments: Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT), Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP Growth), Gifted Evaluation Scales (GES), Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT), or an Academic Product. All are explained in further detail below.

What is the Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT)?

The NNAT is a **mental ability** test, which provides a non-verbal, culturally neutral assessment of general mental ability. It is designed to assess the reasoning ability of students in kindergarten through grade 12. This is a nationally-normed assessment research-proven to be reliable and valid. The NNAT is administered to students in one test session using the computer. The resulting score is reported to parents as a national percentile rank in the mental ability section on the gifted eligibility report. The national percentile rank allows you to compare your child's results to others of the same age across the nation. The 96th percentile is the minimum qualifying score for gifted eligibility.

What is the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)?

The CogAT is a **mental ability test** completed on a computer. The CogAT assesses the level and pattern of cognitive development of students from kindergarten through grade 12. The test measures general and specific reasoning abilities in three batteries: verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal. These abilities reflect the overall cognitive processes that enable individuals to learn new tasks and solve problems. This is a nationally-normed assessment research-proven to be reliable and valid. There are three testing sessions approximately one hour in length; younger students typically spread these sessions over three school days. The resulting score for each battery is reported to parents as a national percentile rank in the mental ability section on the gifted eligibility report. The 96th percentile is the minimum score for gifted eligibility.

What is the NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)?

The Northwestern Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) is a district-administered **achievement test** given to students in grades K-12 district-wide, three times per year, and completed on a computer. Achievement tests assess how well a student has learned objectives in academic areas. This is a nationally-normed assessment research-proven to be reliable and valid. Both the reading and math sections are administered in approximately one-hour sessions each. For gifted identification, reading and math national percentiles are each reported in the achievement section of the gifted eligibility report. The 90th percentile is the minimum qualifying score for gifted eligibility.

What are Gifted Evaluation Scales (GES)?

Gifted evaluation scales are norm-referenced teacher rating scales for **motivation** or **creativity** based on current theories of giftedness; their use meets state guidelines regarding the definition of gifted and talented students for students in grades K-8. This is a nationally-normed instrument research-proven to be reliable and valid. The rating scale is completed by a child's certified teachers and based upon that child's motivational and creativity behaviors exhibited to that teacher in class. The local school's Gifted Eligibility Team will invite two teachers to complete the scale who have known the child for at least thirty days. The highest score of the two will be reported as a national percentile rank to parents in the motivation OR creativity section of the gifted eligibility report. The 90th percentile is the minimum qualifying score for each in gifted eligibility.

What is the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)?

The Figural TTCT is a group-administered pencil and paper **creativity test** requiring pictorial responses. It requires students to use their imagination, solve problems, think of new ideas, and elaborate on their ideas. This assessment does not score a student's drawing skills but rather the ideas and thinking that go into the figural responses. The TTCT is administered in one test session, lasting approximately one hour. The resulting score is reported as a national percentile rank to parents in the creativity section of the gifted eligibility report. The 90th percentile is the minimum qualifying score for gifted eligibility.

What is the Academic Product?

Given in grades 1-5 during second look only, the academic product is a planned experience completed by students in a classroom setting. Products are designed as high-level, open-ended activities designed specifically to elicit and diagnose advanced abilities and do not have a time limit. Products are evaluated independently by at least three trained evaluators using a rubric. Products can be used in the area of creativity, motivation, or achievement. A score of 90 or higher is required to support gifted eligibility. Note that students may not "feel" like they were "tested" when completing a product.

How can I help my child prepare for these instruments?

Knowledge or skills needed are developed as a result of all school and life experiences. These are not tests you can, or should, prepare for as they are meant to measure innate ability. Do *not* overemphasize the importance of these tests or act in a way so as to add any test anxiety. Make sure that your child gets a good night's sleep prior to testing and has a nutritious breakfast each morning before testing.

Why is my child only being recommended for some instruments and not all of them?

The Gifted Eligibility Team will use only one instrument for each category: Mental Ability, Creativity, Achievement, and Motivation. Based on previous testing experiences and/or classroom performance, some children may have prior test data in their permanent record that can be used in one or more categories. Children will not be tested unnecessarily. The Gifted Eligibility Team has more than one option of instrument for most categories. The team will use all relevant data about the student to select the most effective instrument at the time. The team will not exhaust all its options in each category during any referral window.

For additional information, reach out to your school's Gifted Contact Teacher or contact the Office of Gifted and Talented Education at (404) 802-7585.