

## 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 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 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 that 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. NNAT 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 96<sup>th</sup> 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 students' cognitive development levels and patterns from kindergarten through grade 12. The test measures general and specific reasoning abilities in three batteries: verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal. These abilities reflect the cognitive processes that enable individuals to learn new tasks and solve problems. CogAT 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 96<sup>th</sup> percentile is the minimum score for gifted eligibility.

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

The Northwestern Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP Growth) 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. MAP is a nationally normed assessment research-proven to be reliable and valid. Both the reading and math sections are administered in approximately a one-hour session each. For gifted identification, reading and math national percentiles are each reported in the achievement section of the gifted eligibility report. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is the minimum score for gifted eligibility.

#### What are Gifted Evaluation Scales (GES)?

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

### **What is an Academic Product?**

For 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 explicitly designed 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 creativity, motivation, or achievement. A score of 90 or higher is required to support gifted eligibility. 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 because 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 to add any test anxiety. Ensure your child gets a good night's sleep before 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. Some children may have prior test data in their permanent record from testing and observations that can be used in one or more categories. Children will not be tested unnecessarily. The Gifted Eligibility Team has more than one instrument option 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, contact your school's Gifted Contact Teacher or the Office of Gifted and Talented Education at (404) 802-7585.**