

Gifted Screening and Referral Frequently Asked Questions

Revised for Virtual Setting

The responses to the following FAQs have been updated to reflect appropriate answers during a time when APS schools are operating on a fully virtual instructional model.

Gifted and Talented Education in Atlanta Public Schools (APS) provides differentiated instruction for the intellectually advanced and creatively gifted student. Gifted services are available for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade who are actively enrolled in an APS school. Note that students residing in the city of Atlanta enrolled in private schools or home study programs are not eligible for APS gifted testing and services.

What is the process for having my child evaluated for the Gifted and Talented Education Program? APS screens for referral all students who are actively enrolled and attending an Atlanta Public School. The screening/referral and testing processes are broken into two timelines:

- “Second Look” screening is for students who were previously tested and have current test data
- “First Look” screening is for students who do not have current data on record

What is Second Look screening?

Second Look refers only to students who have been previously tested and found ineligible for gifted services with current data still available. These students will have their data reviewed by the local school eligibility team to determine if they qualify for alternative assessments that, if favorable, may make them eligible for gifted services.

What is First Look screening?

First Look refers to students who have not been previously tested and/or do not have current test data (less than two years old) available. These students are screened for possible referral to testing through the automatic, teacher, and parent referral processes:

- I. Automatic Screening** – The gifted eligibility team reviews test scores in the fall
 - Students who score 85%ile or higher on available district-administered achievement assessments will be automatically referred for testing (Grades K-11)
 - Students who scored 90%ile or higher on the latest selected Georgia Milestones EOG/EOC will be automatically referred for testing (Grades 3-9)
 - Students with a cumulative average of 90 or higher over a two year period in core academic areas (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, Social Studies, and full-year Foreign Language) will be automatically referred for testing (Grades 10-11 only)
- II. Teacher Screening** – All school staff members complete the “Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors” (TABs) instrument to observe students for the demonstration of 10 gifted behaviors during a period of two weeks. Students receiving an identified threshold score on the TABs, and who have supporting achievement data, will be referred for gifted testing.
- III. Parent Referral** – Any parent with a child enrolled in an APS school may refer his or her child for gifted and talented testing. Parents must complete the Gifted Referral and Parental Permission Form and submit it to the local school eligibility team for review. The parent referral window is the month of September annually. That parent referral opportunity will be advertised on each individual school’s website. Students of parents who make requests after this window will not be tested during the current school year.

If my child is screened and referred for gifted testing, what happens next?

Students screened through second look or first look (automatic, classroom, or parent) are possibly referred for gifted testing. Once referred for testing:

- Parent receives and signs a written or electronic *Parent Notification for Testing Consent Form*
- Student is evaluated for gifted services; Eligibility is determined; Parents are notified

Can my child be assessed before the start of the school year?

No. The screening, referral, and testing process will take place during the school year as outlined here.

When does Second Look screening/testing take place?

All students tested in the previous school year and found ineligible for gifted services are screened as possible Second Look students. Those students will have their data reviewed in August. Students who qualify and are referred for additional Second Look testing will be tested within a September-October window.

How will my child be assessed if referred for a “Second Look?”

These fall assessments may be provided remotely, at each student’s home on his or her own computer or offered at a central district testing site providing appropriate social distancing and personal protective equipment. The assessments may be given through a web-based test vendor site or through “Google Classroom” as they have been using for fall classwork. Each child will only receive the assessments necessary for areas where he or she did not earn an eligible score in first look. It is important to note that many alternative assessments used with Second Look students may not feel like a “test” to the student; some are activity-oriented.

When does First Look screening/testing take place?

All students are screened through the automatic and classroom screening processes prior to the first look testing window. First look students who are referred for testing will be tested in a January through March time frame. All parents will be notified of eligibility by early May.

How will my child be assessed if referred for a “First Look?”

First look gifted testing will occur during a window from January through March. The method of administration is contingent upon current district operations and feasibility. Each student will be assessed in four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation (completed by teachers). Assessments are web-based and may be completed in a school computer lab.

Will I be notified that my child was referred for testing and when will I know results?

Parents will be notified in writing regarding referral of their child for either second look or first look gifted testing. Additionally, those parents will receive a document to virtually sign and return to give permission for that testing to move forward. Parents will be informed of second look eligibility status by November, and of first look eligibility by May 1.

How long is the testing process?

Each web-based assessment may last from 45 to 90 minutes. Activity-based assessments may be untimed, but generally are completed within an hour. Depending on the grade level of your child and the data which needs to be gathered, gifted testing will consist of approximately one 60-90 minute session each day for one to seven days.

What if my child was identified as gifted in another state?

There is no reciprocity between states for gifted education. However, students with documentation of gifted eligibility in another state are referred for testing in APS for the next testing cycle. Prior to testing, students’ current test scores will be reviewed to determine if any data may be utilized in determining Georgia eligibility.

May I provide results from private assessments?

Gifted eligibility will be determined based upon the findings of Atlanta Public Schools approved assessments. Private testing or evaluations will not be accepted to establish eligibility for APS gifted services.

Who do I contact about the gifted program at my school?

Each school in APS has a gifted eligibility chairperson and a gifted contact teacher. If you have any questions regarding the gifted program at a specific school, one of these individuals will be able to assist you.

What are the benefits of the gifted program?

Intellectually gifted and exceptionally creative students have unique learning characteristics, interests, personal needs, and capabilities. Gifted and Talented Education addresses these unique characteristics and needs by providing an opportunity for gifted students to interact with their intellectual peers and receive differentiated instruction as they participate in strategies which extend and enrich the core curriculum.

How will my student be served in a virtual environment?

As we begin this fall semester in a fully virtual instruction model, know that the content of gifted differentiation will be very similar to the way it was experienced when face-to-face in the school building. The difference in all models of delivery will be the virtual methods used for instruction (Zoom, Google Classroom, etc.). Additionally, in elementary schools that used the “resource” (“pull-out”) delivery model where gifted students are pulled from their homeroom core teacher for instruction may or may not see that done differently this year. Each elementary school delivering through a resource model will communicate a student schedule for “pull-out” time to the student and parent.

If my child is determined eligible, how and when would his or her schedule change?

In elementary school, gifted students receive a minimum of five gifted segments each week from a gifted endorsed teacher. Students are served through a resource model, cluster grouping, collaboration, or advanced content. Once determined eligible, students typically begin to receive gifted services within weeks.

In middle school, gifted students receive five segments each week through content courses. The specific courses for a student are determined by past classroom performance, nationally normed achievement test scores, and school recommendations. Once determined eligible, students typically will begin gifted services at the change of the semester.

In high school, gifted students receive services through Advanced Content courses, Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, Internships, Directed Study, Seminar, and/or Mentorship. Once determined eligible, students will typically begin gifted services at the change of the semester.

If my gifted child leaves APS this year, will she or he have to be reassessed for gifted services if we decide to re-enroll at a later point?

No, reassessment would not be necessary for re-enrollment. If assessed and found eligible for gifted services at a public school within the state of Georgia, that eligibility is valid from the time of that assessment through 12th grade anywhere in the state of Georgia.