

Gifted and Talented Education Screening and Referral Process

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 for actively enrolled students in kindergarten through twelfth grade 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 annually screens all students actively enrolled in an APS school for the appropriateness of referral for gifted eligibility testing. The screening/referral and testing processes follow two timelines:

- "Second Look" screening is for students tested in the previous school year through "First Look."
- "First Look" screening is for students who do not have current gifted testing data on record

What is Second Look screening?

Second Look refers to the automatic process for students with current gifted testing data showing ineligibility in the previous school year. The local school eligibility team will review these students' data to determine if anyone qualifies for alternative assessments administered in the fall semester that may make them eligible.

What is First Look screening?

First Look refers to students not previously tested or who do not have current test data (less than 2 years old) available. These students are screened annually through the automatic, teacher, and parent referral processes:

1. **Automatic Screening** – The gifted eligibility team at each school reviews scores after fall semester, district-administered achievement testing. The team refers students for gifted testing who either:
 - i. Scored 85%ile or higher on the Reading or Math district achievement assessment, OR
 - ii. Were identified as eligible for gifted services in another state.
2. **Teacher Screening** – After automatic referral decisions, additional students may receive a referral from current teachers. Invited certified teachers may complete the *Traits, Aptitudes, and Behaviors* (TABs) Instrument used for rating a student on ten gifted behaviors demonstrated in class. The eligibility team will refer students who meet the referral threshold on the TABs instrument and possess an 80th percentile or higher on the recent district-administered achievement test(s) to be referred.
3. **Parent Referral** – Any parent within APS may request referral of their child for gifted testing. Parents must submit the Online Referral Form for review *within the referral window*. Otherwise, the student will test in the following school year. Students requested to be referred by a parent must score at the 80th percentile or higher on the recent district-administered achievement test(s) to be referred.

What happens next if my child is screened and referred for gifted testing?

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

1. The parent receives, signs, and returns the *Parent Consent for Testing Form* to the school.
2. The student is evaluated for gifted services; Eligibility is determined; Parents are notified by May.

Can my child be tested before the school year starts?

No. The APS gifted program screening and testing process will occur during the school year as detailed here.

When does Second Look screening/testing take place?

All students tested in the previous school year and found ineligible are possible Second Look referrals. They will have their data reviewed in August. Students referred for additional Second Look assessments will test in September-October. The eligibility team will notify parents if a child qualifies for a Second Look. It is important to note that many alternative assessments used with Second Look students may not feel like a "test" to the student. The eligibility team notifies parents of the child's eligibility status by late October.

When does First Look screening/testing take place?

All students are screened through the automatic and classroom screening processes from August through January. First Look students referred for testing will test in the February-March time frame. The eligibility team will notify parents if a child qualifies for a First Look. All parents will be notified of eligibility by May.

How long is the testing process?

The time depends on your child's grade level and the required assessments. Gifted testing will consist of approximately one hour of testing each day for one to four 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. Before testing, the eligibility team will review students' current data to determine if any may be utilized in deciding Georgia eligibility.

May I provide results from private assessments?

No. The school's Eligibility Team determines gifted eligibility based on the findings of Atlanta Public Schools approved assessments. Therefore, private testing or evaluations will not be accepted to establish eligibility for APS gifted services.

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

Each school in APS has a gifted eligibility team chairperson and a gifted lead teacher 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. In addition, the program allows gifted students to interact with their intellectual peers as they participate in classes that extend and enrich the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

If my child is determined to be eligible, how and when would their schedule change?

For Elementary Students: Second Look students found eligible typically begin services as soon as possible. First Look students found eligible will begin services at the start of the following fall semester.

For Middle and High School students: Second Look students found eligible will begin services at the semester change. First Look students found eligible will begin services at the start of the following fall semester.

How will gifted services look for my child?

Elementary: Gifted students receive a minimum of five gifted segments per week from a gifted-endorsed teacher through either a resource model, cluster grouping, collaboration, or advanced content.

Middle/High: Gifted students receive a minimum of five segments each week through core content, AP, or IB courses. School personnel determine the specific courses for a student using past classroom performance, nationally normed achievement test scores, and teacher recommendations.

For additional information, contact the Office of Gifted and Talented Education (404) 802-7585.

Assessments Used in Gifted Eligibility Testing 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 gifted eligibility testing process, the Gifted Eligibility Team at your school may request your consent to administer one or more of the instruments detailed 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 used during First Look testing. 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 96th percentile is the minimum qualifying score for gifted eligibility.

What is the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)?

The CogAT is a **mental ability** test used during Second Look testing. 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. It is computer-administered through three testing sessions, approximately one hour in length; younger students typically spread these sessions over three days. The 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 Growth)?

The Northwestern Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP Growth) is a district-administered **achievement test** given to students on computer in grades K-12 three times per year. 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 90th percentile is the minimum score for gifted eligibility. **NOTE:** Scores from the "Spanish MAP Growth Reading" assessment (possibly given in DLI classes) are not valid for gifted eligibility as there are no national norms. Scores from the "MAP Growth Reading" assessment administered with initial instructions in Spanish are nationally normed and can be utilized. MAP Growth scores are used for First and Second Look.

What are Gifted Evaluation Scales (GES)?

Gifted evaluation scales are reliable and valid nationally-normed rating scales for **motivation** and **creativity**. GES ratings are used in grades K-11 for First and Second Look testing. Two certified teachers are invited to rate students on motivation and creativity behaviors exhibited in class. The highest score in each area will be reported as a national percentile rank in the motivation AND/OR creativity section of the state gifted eligibility report. The 90th percentile is the minimum qualifying score. **NOTE:** The GaDOE rule only permits one score from any teacher rating scale to be utilized for gifted eligibility. Therefore, if needed to become eligible for gifted services, only one eligible score from the GES, **motivation OR creativity**, may be utilized to make that child eligible. We administer the GES to all students first; if needed, the TTCT follows.

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

The TTCT is an additional creativity assessment used in First Look testing and only administered if an eligible score in the creativity area is needed to make that child eligible for services or refer that child to a Second Look in the following fall. 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. If administered, the resulting score is reported as a national percentile rank to parents in the creativity section of the gifted eligibility report (instead of the GES creativity score). The 90th 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 identify 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 one or more instrument(s) 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.