

Gifted and Talented Education Screening, Referral, and Testing Cycle Process Frequently Asked Questions (2025-26)

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 first grade 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 does it mean to have my child “screened” for Gifted Program eligibility assessment?

APS annually screens all (universally) students actively enrolled in APS traditional schools for the appropriateness of referral for gifted eligibility testing. The APS Universal Screener is our district-administered MAP Growth assessment given to all students three times each school year. A threshold score attained on that assessment, either the Reading or Mathematics score, results in a “referral” for gifted eligibility assessment.

What is the screening “threshold” protocol for referral?

APS has Board-approved protocols, applied consistently to all students, used to identify students who are referred for gifted eligibility assessment. We have established a threshold score on the MAP Growth Reading or Math assessment that identifies students with the most likely potential for success by the end of the assessment cycle. MAP Growth scores over the previous 24 months are considered valid for this referral and are reviewed when decisions are made. Students are referred who either:

1. Grades 1-10: Scored 85%ile or higher on any Reading or Math MAP Growth in the previous 24 months, Grade K: Scored 90%ile or higher on any Reading or Math MAP Growth during that school year, OR
2. Enrolled recently and were identified as eligible for gifted services in another state.

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

When a student is screened and then referred for testing, the parent/guardian receives, signs, and returns a *Parent Consent for Testing and Placement* through an email communication. Once consent is received, the student is evaluated for gifted services (see the “Assessments Used” FAQs). Eligibility is determined by the end of a semester-long testing cycle. Parents are notified of eligibility status at the end of that cycle.

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 the gifted eligibility testing take place?

For students in grades 6-10, the testing window is September through November. Screening and referral take place at the beginning of fall semester and referred students begin the initial battery of gifted eligibility assessments in September. Assessments, where needed, continue through October (see the “Assessments Used” FAQs). The eligibility team will notify parents of the eligibility decision by December.

For students in grades K-5, the testing window is late January through mid-March. Screening and referral take place at the beginning of spring semester and referred students begin the initial battery of gifted eligibility assessments in January. Assessments, where needed, continue through mid-March (see the “Assessments Used” FAQs). The eligibility team will notify parents of the eligibility decision by May.

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

There is no reciprocity between states. Students with documentation of gifted eligibility in another state are referred for the next testing cycle. The eligibility team reviews any current data to determine usability in GA.

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. Private evaluations will not be accepted to establish eligibility for APS gifted services.

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 his or her schedule change?

For students in grades 6-10, students found eligible start services at the beginning of the spring semester.

For students in grades K-5, students found eligible start services beginning the following fall semester.

If my child is determined to be ineligible at the end of a testing cycle, what happens next?

All assessment data, for students who are not found eligible during the current cycle, will remain valid for three additional semesters. During those semesters, the school eligibility team will continue to monitor data in three areas: 1) district-based MAP Growth assessment scores for all students, 2) two-year core cumulative average for students in grades 6-10, and 3) reported individual Student Performances awarded First Place for students in all grades. If a student becomes eligible due to that continued monitoring, the parent/guardian will be informed. During those three semesters of monitoring, no new GATE-administered eligibility assessments are given. An ineligible student may be referred for another initial battery of gifted eligibility assessments after those three monitoring semesters have passed.

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 scheduled for a student using past classroom performance, nationally normed achievement test scores, and teacher recommendations.

For more detailed information on how the gifted program looks at each level, see the separate FAQs for each level found at this link: <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/21415>

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

Each school in APS has a locally-selected gifted contact teacher to assist you. Also, the APS district website gifted program page is found at this link: <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/20890>