

## **Department of GATE Assessment FAQs for School Staff and Parents**

### **Can/how can scores from universal screening be used by school teams?**

While CogAT and NNAT scores cannot be used to drive special education eligibility determinations, they may be considered as one data point. An average or above average score may be useful to "rule out" Intellectual Disability in conjunction with other data (e.g., achievement scores). However, a low CogAT or NNAT score may not be used to "rule in" any diagnosis. These scores are not intended to be used to make placement or curricular decisions.

### **How is a student referred for GT?**

Students are referred for GT testing by their site MTSS teams. Once the GT referral paperwork is complete, it is submitted to the Dept. of GATE/Assessment Division. If referral paperwork is received in time and approved, the student will be tested at the next available opportunity. There are testing windows for referrals in Fall and Spring every year.

### **Who can be referred for GT testing?**

There are a few procedures which must be kept in mind when referring as not all students can be referred at any given time. Except by Admin Review Team exception (e.g., result of an appeal decision), no student may be retested for GT within 12 months of a previous attempt (including from universal screening). Also, except by Admin Review Team exception, no student may be tested within 12 months of an expected GT screening (e.g., a 4th grader could not be referred for testing in the spring when she will take the NNAT in the Fall of her 5th grade year). Generally speaking, no student may be tested for GT more than three times. Typically, students are tested in 2nd and 5th grades meaning they may have one additional attempt as the result of a referral or appeal.

### **How are GT eligibility decisions made?**

Students scoring at or above the 98th percentile rank on a cognitive or IQ score (e.g., CogAT, NNAT, Raven's, WASI-II, WISC-V) qualify automatically for GT. Students whose scores are lower than this may still qualify through an eligibility matrix. In a matrix eligibility, students reach a minimum cut score through a combination of 1) cognitive score, 2) achievement score, and 3) if applicable, special student environmental factors (e.g., CIT, FRL, IEP, 504, EL). It is not possible to qualify with a cognitive score below the 90th percentile rank and is not likely below the 95th.

### **How are parents notified of these decisions?**

For students who are part of the universal screening (2nd and 5th grades), families of qualifying students are notified via U.S. mail. Families of all participating students (including non-qualifying students) receive a ConnectEd phone call once scores become available on Infinite Campus that their children's scores from this test are available on Infinite Campus and that they can get more information about the test and the interpretation of scores by checking the Dept. of GATE website or by contacting the department directly with questions. For students who are referred for testing, families of both qualifying and non-qualifying students will receive results via U.S. mail. In this case, there is no ConnectEd phone call.

### **How can families appeal eligibility decisions?**

Families may appeal GT decisions. Specific details for these procedures may be found at

<https://www.washoeschools.net/Page/10766>

### **Can parents request GT testing?**

The decision to refer a student for GT testing is to take place through the MTSS process. Students are tested, barring some issue with the referral, when the referral paperwork indicates that the team reached a consensus decision to move forward. Parent consent is required to move forward with the referral

evaluation. Parents may recommend or advocate to MTSS teams for their child but the referral is ultimately driven by the site MTSS team.

**Can parents request individual testing instead of the universal screening?**

Individualized testing (e.g., with the WASI-II or WISC-V) is not routinely conducted in response to GT referrals. The GATE Admin Review Team may decide to conduct individualized testing for students on the basis of individual needs or circumstances (e.g., needs driven by an IEP, 504, or language differences). Individualized testing is not conducted as a result of parent or school request or preference.

**Can parents opt their children out of universal screening?**

Yes, but consent for participation in the NNAT universal screening is passive. Teachers distribute out passive consent forms to their 2nd and 5th grade students. Students are only opted out if parents complete the form and return it indicating this preference.

**How do incoming students eligible for GT in other districts qualify here?**

Students new to WCSD who were eligible for GT or GT comparable services elsewhere must meet the same criteria to qualify here. If GT records from out of district indicate the student earned qualifying scores on accepted tests, the student will qualify for services here. If GT records are not sufficient to qualify a student who was receiving services in another district, the student will be scheduled to take a cognitive test (i.e., the CogAT) at the next available opportunity. In any case, students coming from other districts must meet the same minimum criteria to qualify for GT in WCSD as any other student.

**What does the assessment process look like for Twice Exceptional (2E) students/EL students?**

The testing process for students with special needs (e.g., IEP/504) is decided on an individual basis by the Admin Review Team according to their needs. The student may be tested with a WISC-V and, depending on the characteristics of the student, qualifying scores on different composite indices may be used in place of the Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) or General Abilities Index (GAI) (e.g., the Verbal Expanded Crystallized Index [VECI] for a student with blindness or the Expanded Fluid Reasoning Index [EFRI] for a student with a specific learning disability in expressive language. The Nonverbal IQ (NVIQ) may be used for EL or formerly EL students. Overall, the process is determined on a case-by-case basis.

**What are the procedures if I have a student score in the gifted range on a cognitive test?**

For students qualifying for GT from universal screening, the Assessment Division of the Dept. of GATE will mail home the relevant paperwork. Services may begin as soon as parents complete and return a Parent Authorization for Program Placement (GT-5) form. No action from the school site is needed to initiate the eligibility process. Students being evaluated for special education may earn scores at or near the qualification criteria for GT, the school team is encouraged to refer the student for a GT evaluation. The psychological report should be included with the standard referral paperwork as the Admin Review Team can benefit from this testing.

**How do I access scores on GATE assessments given in the past?**

CogAT and NNAT scores from the 2014-2015 school year and later can be found on Infinite Campus. CogAT scores from the 2013-2014 school year pilot study do not appear on IC. Scores from other types of testing (e.g., individualized IQ testing or scores that came with the student from out of district) do not appear on IC but may be requested from the Dept. of GATE Assessment Division.

**How do I find out if a student is GATE eligible, or SWAS eligible?**

If a student is GT eligible, this will be documented on the GATE tab in IC. Parents of students who qualify for SWAS are notified. Letters are also sent to the school counselor with instructions to distribute to the child's teacher as well. However, parents and staff can always inquire to the Dept. of GATE Assessment Division. Students may not qualify for SWAS through universal screening or computerized testing alone. The student must score at or above the 99th percentile rank on an accepted full scale IQ

measure (e.g., FSIQ, GAI, or NVIQ when appropriate) on an accepted individualized IQ test (e.g., WISC-V, RIAS-2, Stanford-Binet, 5th, DAS-II).

**Is there a difference between *qualifying* for GT and being *eligible* for services?**

Students *qualify* for GT once they meet criteria. Students are considered *eligible* once parents of qualifying students complete and return a Parent Authorization for Program Placement (GT-5) form.

**What is the Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test, Third Edition (NNAT-3)?**

The NNAT is a nonverbal measure of cognitive ability and reasoning resulting in national standard scores based on age and used in the identification of gifted and talented students. Test items are pictorial and require no spoken or written language, making it an excellent choice for use with assessing students who are English language learners or have limited academic skills. Students answer visually based challenges requiring nonverbal reasoning through a set of progressive matrices, flexible enough to be used at any grade level.

**What is the Cognitive Abilities Test, Seventh Edition (CogAT 7) Full Form?**

The CogAT appraises the development of students’ reasoning abilities using verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal cognitive tasks. The reasoning abilities assessed by the CogAT have been consistently shown through research to be linked to the same skills required for successful learning and problem solving. The ten levels of CogAT cover ages 5 through 17 and beyond. The CogAT represents an evolution of the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Tests first published in 1954. In its newest edition, the CogAT 7 features improvement measurement capabilities for the abilities of English language learners (ELLs), higher ceilings of ability measured, and updated national norms.

**What do the NNAT and CogAT scores mean?**

Infinite Campus shows two scores for either test. These scores are two different ways of viewing your child’s overall performance:

1. The “National Percentile Rank” refers to your child’s percentile rank (ranging between 1 and 99). This number represents the approximate percentage of same-aged (i.e., within one month) peers your child out-performed across the country. For example, a child who took the test at the age of 6 years and 4 months of age who scored at the 56th percentile rank scored better than about 56 out of every 100 peers who were within a month of being 6 years and 4 months of age from across the country. Students who score from the 25th to the 75th percentile rank are considered to be in the “average” range. Students who score at the 98th percentile rank qualify for Gifted and Talented services. The table below gives additional information.
2. The “Scale Score” is a representation of how your child scored in which 89-111 is considered average. The table below gives additional information.

<i>Description</i>	<i>National Percentile Rank</i>	<i>Standard Age Score</i>
Below Average	1st-24th	Below 89
Average	25th-75th	89-111
High Average	76th-89th	112-120
Superior	90th-97th	121-130
Very superior	98th+	131+