



## 20 Frequently Asked Questions Regarding GT Test Results

November 2014



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for

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## 20 Frequently Asked Questions Regarding GT Test Results

Question #1 What do you consider when you do a screening for gifted programming in Conroe Independent School District?

Answer #1 Areas considered in screening for gifted programming in Conroe Independent School District are as follows:

1. Ability
2. Achievement
3. Observed Performance

Question #2 What are the ability instruments that CISD uses to screen for giftedness?

Answer #2 We use group and individual ability tests in CISD. They are as follows:

**Group ability tests** are commonly used in situations of large numbers. OLSAT, CogAT, and NNAT are examples of group ability tests that are used in Conroe. These tests can be administered by any member of our professional staff that has been trained specifically for ability screening.

**Individual ability tests** are considered the most accurate measure of intelligence, but even they are not perfect. CISD uses the RIST or Reynolds Intellectual Screening Test when discrepancies arise in individual cases. The RIST composite yielded a median standard error of measurement of 3.35 and a median internal consistency coefficient of .95. Furthermore, uncorrected and corrected stability coefficients of .80 and .84 respectively, were obtained for the RIST composite. These data suggest that the reliability for the RIST is adequate to serve as either a first or second screening gate and is comparable to that of intelligence tests of far greater length. The RIST must be given by a highly trained professional. CISD requires RIST administrators to not only go through the initial training, but also complete a refresher course each year to avoid examiner drift. The person supervising and training those who use the RIST must have successfully completed advanced assessment training.

Question #3 How does the RIST, OLSAT, NNAT, and the CogAT differ?

Answer #3 See the table that follows.

	What the test measures	Tasks required of the student during the test	Setting of the test	Results utilized in CISD
<p>OLSAT</p> <p>Otis Lennon School Ability Test</p>	<p>Based on the notion that to learn new things, students must be able to perceive accurately, to recognize and recall what has been perceived, to think logically, to understand relationships, to abstract from a set of particulars, and to apply generalizations to new and different contexts.</p>	<p>Processes are measured through performance on such tasks as detecting likenesses and differences, following directions, classifying, establishing sequence, completing analogies, and solving matrixes.</p>	<p>Group or Individual</p>	<p>Verbal national percentile rank – to be used to make placement decisions regarding Language Arts and Social Studies</p> <p>Nonverbal national percentile rank – to use to make placement decisions regarding Math and Science</p>
<p>RIST</p> <p>Reynolds Intellectual Screening Test</p>	<p><u>The Guess What subtest</u> measures vocabulary knowledge in combination with reasoning skills that are predicated on language development and fund of information.</p> <p><u>Odd Item Out subtest</u> measures general reasoning skills emphasizing <u>nonverbal</u> ability.</p>	<p>The examinee is asked to listen to a question that contains clues presented orally by the examiner and then to give a verbal response that is consistent with the clues. The questions pertain to physical objects, abstract concepts, and well-known places and historical figures from a variety of cultures and geographic locations. Many disciplines are represented among the test questions.</p> <p>For each item, the examinee is presented with a picture card containing from 5 to 7 figures or drawings. One of the figures or drawings on the picture card has a distinguishing characteristic, making it different from the others.</p>	<p>Individual only</p>	<p>Verbal national percentile rank – to be used to make placement decisions regarding Language Arts and Social Studies</p> <p>Nonverbal national percentile rank – to use to make placement decisions regarding Math and Science</p>
<p>NNAT</p> <p>Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test</p>	<p>The NNAT is a brief, culture-fair, nonverbal measure of school ability. Students must rely on reasoning and problem-solving skills, not on verbal skills.</p>	<p>Student examines the relationships among the parts of a matrix and determines which response is the correct one on the basis of the information inherent in the item.</p>	<p>Group or Individual</p>	<p>Nonverbal national percentile rank – to use to make placement decisions regarding Math and Science</p>
<p>CogAT</p> <p>Cognitive Ability Test</p>	<p>The CogAT measures general inductive and deductive abstract reasoning, verbal and quantitative skills</p>	<p>Student are faced with tasks that use verbal and quantitative concepts and symbols. Other tasks require no outside knowledge; all of the information needed to answer an item is embedded. Some items require a fund of systematic procedures and strategies for solving novel problems.</p>	<p>Group or Individual</p>	<p>Verbal national percentile rank – to be used to make placement decisions regarding Language Arts and Social Studies</p> <p>Nonverbal national percentile rank – to use to make placement decisions regarding Math and Science</p>

Question #4 I do not understand the CogAT. What is on that test? What can the student do to prepare?

Answer #4 The chart below describes the sequence of the CogAT. The CogAT appraises the cognitive development of students from kindergarten through grade 12. The questions on CogAT require students to demonstrate their reasoning abilities in each of the three symbol systems most closely related to success in school: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning and nonverbal reasoning.

**The Verbal Battery** assesses students' abilities to use search, retrieval and comparison processes that are essential for verbal reasoning.

**The Quantitative Battery** assesses students' abilities to reason about patterns and relations using concepts that are essential in quantitative thinking.

**The Nonverbal Battery** assesses students' abilities to reason with somewhat more novel questions that use spatial and figural content.

Cluster/Item Type
<i>Verbal Battery</i> <u>Subtest 1:</u> Picture Analogies <u>Subtest 2:</u> Sentence Completion <u>Subtest 3:</u> Picture Classification
<i>Quantitative Battery</i> <u>Subtest 4:</u> Number Analogies <u>Subtest 5:</u> Number Puzzles <u>Subtest 6:</u> Number Series
<i>Nonverbal Battery</i> <u>Subtest 7:</u> Figure Matrices <u>Subtest 8:</u> Paper Folding <u>Subtest 9:</u> Figure Classification

Question #5 What does CISD use to measure achievement?

Answer #5 We use the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) for our English speaking students and the Logramos for our Spanish speaking students. The Stanford/Aprenda Achievement Tests are used in discrepancy cases.

Question #6 What is meant by "Observed Performance?"

Answer #6 Observed performance data is collected from the parent and/or the teacher as they observe the student either in the classroom or at home. Instruments are used to collect this information.

Question #7 What instruments are used to collect data for observed performance?

Answer #7 We use a parent survey for Grades K-4 and the GATES (Gifted and Talented Evaluation Scale) for grades 3-12. The TPOI (Talent Pool Observation Inventory) is used in grades K-2.

Some tests aren't tests at all. Tests such as the GATES and the TPOI are actually surveys, where the teachers subjectively record their opinions about the child's performance using a rating scale. The value of the results depends on the gifted training level of the teacher completing the survey. The teacher must compare the student being observed with a student of AVERAGE ability for that grade level and content area in order for the ratings to be accurate.

You'd think that parent surveys would be the most accurate measure of a child, but they often aren't. Many gifted parents have a different perspective of giftedness than teachers of the gifted have. Some cultures do not value certain characteristics of giftedness and view them negatively and a result they are often reluctant to report those characteristics or the degree to which they are expressed. Many gifted parents don't have the perspective of seeing a variety of children who are the same age as their child. They see only their own children, or this is their first or only child, or this child is just like the cousins. Or my favorite: gifted families that think everybody operates the same way that they do – so they can't possibly be gifted.

It all boils down to how giftedness is being defined and how it is being observed. Observed performance is examined very closely and carefully through the perspective of the person or persons providing the information.

Question #8 Why are the tests used in screening for GT timed?

Answer #8 All of our testing is timed as we are interested in intellectual efficiency. Gifted students need intellectual efficiency in order to be successful in the modified services provided within CISD. Modifications made to the general school curriculum for the gifted emphasize depth, complexity, and pacing – all of which require the gifted student to exercise their ability not only efficiently but effectively.

Question #9 Why can't I count only the questions the student attempts on the test without having to be penalized with many unanswered questions in the case of a reflective test taker who does not finish all of the test questions?

Answer #9 The testing companies strive to design tests that include the number of items necessary for breadth of content and reliability of assessment while at the same time addressing achievement parameters of content, process, cognitive functioning, and instructional standards. Review the answer to Question #8 as it relates to this question as well. All student score data used to make placement decisions for gifted programming in CISD will only be reported and considered that are derived from professional standardized norming procedures.

Question #10 What is age-normed mean?

Answer #10 We use age-normed data for ability test reports. This simply means that the score was calculated statistically to represent the student's performance by his or her age and not grade. This is important data for gifted students as they may or may not be in grade appropriate classes. Achievement test results are reported as grade level scores.

Question #11 Why is the score reported in NPR – what is NPR?

Answer #11 NPR means National Percentile Rank. NPR affords us an opportunity to compare the performance of our students with those across our nation either in age or by grade.

Question #12 Why are the student scores reported in percentiles and not percents?

Answer #12 **Percent** correct is generally used in the classroom, not on intelligence or achievement tests. Percent correct is easy to understand. 90% correct means that the child got 9 of 10, or 90 of 100, or a similar number of questions correct. Percent is often confused with percentile.

**Percentile** is most commonly found on intelligence and achievement test scores. Percentile indicates what percent of the subjects scored below this child. In percentile scores, 50th percentile is average.

Reporting in percentiles gives us an opportunity to use tests of different lengths and varieties and yet have a standardized reporting score.

Question #13 Why would a student's score on any given subtest be reported in the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile when they only missed one question?

Answer #13 If the test is properly normed, 50% of the students will score below the 50th percentile. Gifted students often score in the 96th or 99th percentile on achievement testing. But on many tests, especially grade-level achievement tests, the tests are designed so that many students know most or all of the material. This makes percentile scores for the top-scoring students seem odd. If 10 percent of the students in the normalization study got all the questions correct, then they would have each earned the 90th percentile. This creates a conundrum - one or a few questions wrong, can terribly skew the percentile scores. Using the same numbers as the last example, if 10% of the normalization population got all the questions correct, and your child got only one question incorrect, her score would appear as something less than 90th percentile! For this reason, it is always important to ask to see the raw score when the percentile score doesn't seem to make sense for the child.

Question #14 Who makes the placement decisions regarding student placement in gifted programming in CISD?

Answer #14 It is state law that GT placement decisions be made by a district committee of GT trained professionals. CISD uses campus GT placement decisions.

Question #15 How many people serve on these Campus GT Placement Committees?

Answer #15 By state law there must be a minimum of three persons on that committee. The number will vary from campus to campus, but they will all have at least three CISD professional staff members.

Question #16 Can a parent be a member of this committee?

Answer #16 CISD does not allow parents to be members of this committee due to privacy issues. CISD does not allow professional staff members who have children that are being considered for gifted programming to serve on the committee during that decision making process.

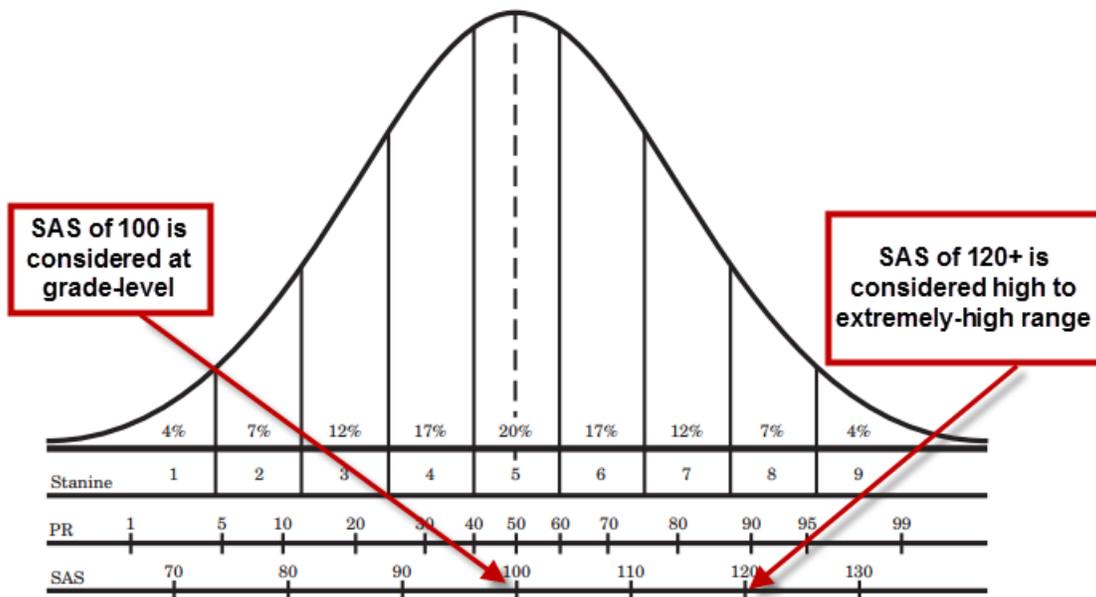
Question #17 How are these Campus GT Placement Committees formed and trained?

Answer #17 CISD Campus GT Coordinators choose their GT Placement Committee members. The state law requires that these members be trained in the areas of nature and needs of gifted learners which is part of the general gifted education training offered in CISD.

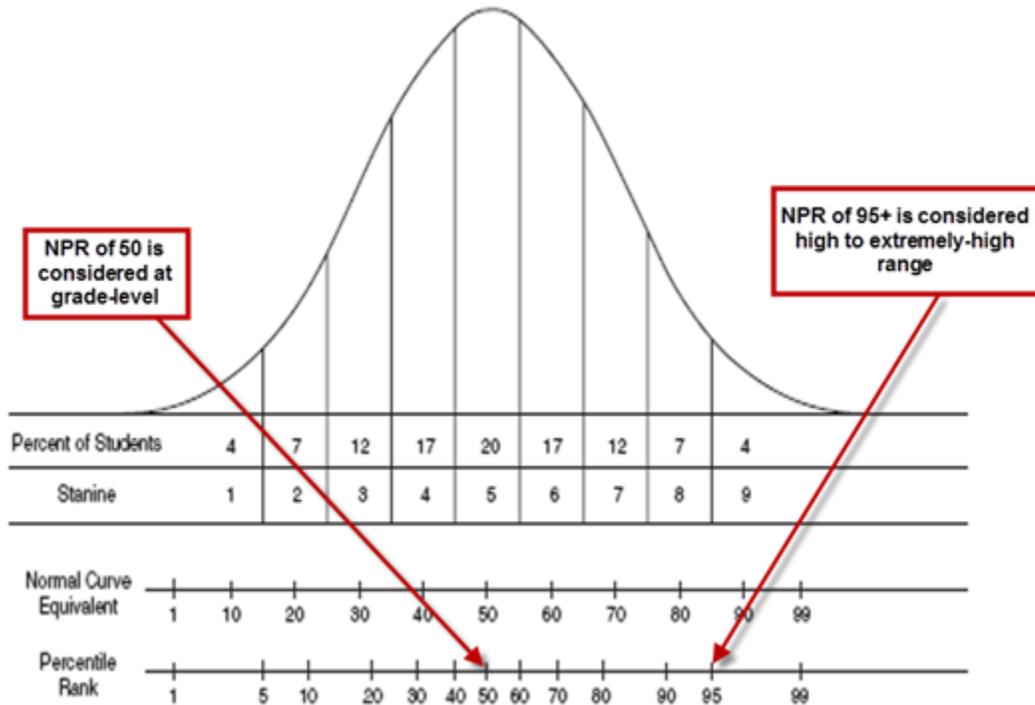
Question #18 What guides the decisions made by the Campus GT Placement Committees?

Answer #18 See the figures that follow.

## GT Score Requirements for Ability Measurements



# GT Score Requirements for Achievement Measurements



Question #19 When should I expect to hear about the committee’s decision?

Answer #19 Group tests are sent away to the testing company to be scored. When the scores return, forms have to be completed, and committees convene to make decisions. This all takes many weeks. As soon as all of that processing is complete, parents will be notified by the campus. The District Gifted Programs Office does not house student testing records or Campus GT Placement Committee minutes. Please contact the campus for this information.

Question #20 What if I disagree with the committee’s decision?

Answer #20 You may file an appeal letter addressed to the GT Placement Committee and delivered to the GT Campus Coordinator.