

The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)

We begin our GATE identification process with the CogAT Screening Form, which provides students with 18 questions in each of the 3 basic problem-solving/creative-thinking categories: Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal. The CogAT is a cognitive ability measure used to determine thinking and general thought processes, using logic, riddles, and analogies in making connections when finding seemingly unrelated relationships may be hard to find, for those students that really think outside the box. There is no time limit for student responses and scores from the picture-based questions do not relate to student academic performance/achievement or core content knowledge in any way.

Reading The “CogAT Screening Form” Report

The “Cognitive Abilities Test “Screening Form” report you received offers a snapshot of your student’s original screening scores from the initial” creative thinking measures that Mrs. Caswell conducted with your child’s homeroom class in the spring. The document provides the number of attempted (Att.) items and the number of correct answers in each category. You may notice specific student strengths when comparing the number of correct responses within each area (e.g. 16 correct/18 total).

- **Verbal:**

- What it measures: The ability to use search, retrieval, and comparison processes essential for verbal reasoning, focusing on understanding words and their relationships. It assesses vocabulary, comprehension of ideas, verbal memory, and discovering word relationships.
- Verbally gifted children exhibit advanced language skills and a passion for verbal learning. They often show a strong vocabulary, a keen sense of humor, and a knack for language games. They also tend to learn to read early, enjoy storytelling, and possess a high level of verbal comprehension.

- **Quantitative:**

- What it measures: Reasoning about patterns and relations using concepts essential for quantitative thinking. This includes understanding basic quantitative concepts, relationships, discovering rules or principles, and problem-solving.
- Quantitative giftedness is characterized by an exceptional ability in logical reasoning and mathematics. Individuals with this aptitude demonstrate a strong understanding of mathematical concepts, enjoy mathematical reasoning, and use logic to solve both math and real-world problems. They may also appreciate obscure math topics, have high accuracy in computation, and quickly learn and process complex information, especially in a math-related context.

- **Nonverbal:**

- What it measures: Reasoning and problem-solving with patterns, relationships, pictorial analogies, and categories using geometric shapes and figures. It measures the ability to look for shapes and patterns.
- Non-verbally gifted individuals excel in visual-spatial reasoning, sequential processing, and tasks requiring intuition and creativity. They may struggle with verbal tasks, but demonstrate exceptional abilities in areas like art, music, physical activities, and problem-solving through non-verbal means. They often communicate nonverbally, using facial expressions, gestures, and bodily movements.

For reference, we are looking at the “age percentile rank” in the upper left corner of the document(s) we provided in the GATE communication envelope you received in the mail. Our eligibility threshold for GATE in CVUSD is 95%ile or higher. Students with an “Age Percentile Rank/Total Score” of 95 or higher on the CogAT Screening Form were found to be GATE eligible without administering additional creative thinking measures.

On the “CUSP” of Eligibility?

As mentioned in the “[opt-out](#)” information you received from your school principal in March, *“Students on the ‘**cus**p’ of eligibility based on their individual results of the initial CogAT screening measure may be recommended by the GATE Placement Committee to complete follow-up measures such as the CogAT Complete Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal Ability Test.”* The 90%ile is our baseline for determining on the “cus” scores for recommended follow-up. Students with 16-18 “Number Correct” in any of those three CogAT Screening Form categories [Picture Analogies (Verbal), Number Analogies (Quantitative), and/or Figure Matrices (Nonverbal)] were given the remaining two measures within their area(s) of expertise to complete the “battery” in that section using the “CogAT Post-Screener”.

Reading The CogAT Post-Screener (Follow-Up) Report

Students that were on the “cus” of eligibility and completed the “Cognitive Abilities Test” battery in any area and had an Age Percentile Rank of 95 or higher in any full-battery area (Verbal, Quantitative, Nonverbal, or Composite) would be eligible. *Please note that any category that was *not on the “cus” of eligibility* will still show the original 18 items attempted from the initial CogAT Screening Form, since the follow-up items were not attempted/delivered. The “number correct” fields for those items are blank to show those sections of the “post-screener” were not administered/completed.

Future GATE Identification Options

Recognizing that this information captures a minute moment in time on a single day, and any number of variables can play into student performance on any given day/time, our 2nd grade universal screening is **not** the only opportunity for students to be considered for GATE. If you would like to refer your student for GATE rescreening in fourth grade, you can complete [this parent referral](#) and return it to your school or Mrs. Caswell by **November 2, 2026**, for them to be added to our fall/winter GATE screening list for referred students during the **2026-2027** school year. *The reason for the year delay is due to the fact that the CogAT platform prohibits student access within one year of each administration to maintain test viability for future sessions. Therefore, additional screening cannot be conducted within 12 months of final delivery, which would be June 2026. Since we do not conduct GATE screening over the summer, the next GATE referral opportunity for 3rd grade students that participated in Universal Screening in the spring of 2025, would be fall of 2026 during *4th grade*. (A teacher recommendation/referral is **not** required to initiate the rescreening process.)

Cultivating Creative/Critical Thinking and Practicing Problem Solving

If you are looking for ways to help your student emphasize their strengths or provide opportunities for additional creative thinking exposure/practice, our CVUSD [GATE webpage](#) has a variety of resources available to **all** our students. The [enrichment/extension resources](#), linked on the right side of the page, can be especially helpful in providing options for students to foster, grow, and develop their creative thinking, problem solving, and deductive reasoning skills.