

FAQs about gifted testing

Q: How do I know if I should have my child tested?

A: While every gifted child is different, there are a number of characteristics and traits that many gifted children share.

Q: What is the process for having my child tested?

A: PV Schools adheres to the guidelines set by the State of Arizona Gifted Mandate. We offer testing three times a year at all the district's elementary schools. There is a scheduled week for testing during the fall, winter, and spring at each school. Parents, teachers, and administrators may nominate students for gifted testing.

Q: Will PV Schools test my child if I live outside of the Paradise Valley School District?

A: If your child is currently enrolled in the PV Schools schools, but resides outside the district, we can test your child at the same time we test other students at the attending school.

Testing schedules and resources do not allow us to extend testing to students residing outside the PV Schools boundaries if they are not currently enrolled in the PV Schools. Please contact your home school district for testing information within your district.

Q: What scores are needed to qualify for services?

A: To qualify for gifted services in PV Schools, students must score in the 97th percentile or above, in any one area — Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal — on a state approved test.

Q: If my child does not qualify for gifted services can he/she retest at another time?

A: Test administration guidelines require that 12 months pass before the same test is administered again. It is generally recommended to wait two years before retesting. If the student scores in the high 80's to mid 90's, parents and teachers may consider retesting in the future. Retesting a child more than twice usually does not provide drastically different results.

Q: For what reasons would I consider outside testing?

A: Testing administered in the school district yields valid and reliable results. Psychologists can administer different types of tests than are available in the schools. Some parents choose private testing by a trained psychologist when they are seeking a broader understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of a child, or if they believe that individual testing would be more appropriate for their child.

Q: Why doesn't the district blanket test for gifted identification?

A: Gifted identification tests are not designed for blanket testing. Practice shows that when blanket testing is held, fewer students are identified! This can occur for several reasons. The testing environment may not be ideal because there are usually many students being tested at one time. Testing large groups can cause distractions that can otherwise be prevented in a more controlled setting.

Gifted identified students are as far removed from the norm as are students qualifying for special education services. Based on a bell curve, equal percentages of students fall into each of these special-needs groups. Teachers and parents who recognize the special needs of these students are encouraged to recommend the students for testing. To help parents and teachers determine if testing is appropriate for a student, we have created a Parent Nomination packet and Teacher Nomination packet.

Q: Who provides the testing? When will I receive test results?

A: PV Schools employs a team of gifted testing technicians to administer testing to all the schools. The testers are experienced teachers with training in gifted testing administration. Each tester is assigned a group of schools, and works closely with the gifted specialists to schedule and organize testing at each school.

Gifted Education Services department oversees the evaluation and reporting process. We aim to notify parents of test results within three weeks of testing. Parent notification letters are mailed to parents. The students' home schools receive the same information so they can make appropriate educational placements.

Q: My child is currently in pre-school. Can I have her tested now?

A: Schools offer gifted testing beginning in the kindergarten year in accordance with the Arizona state mandate. It is strongly recommended to wait until the spring of the kindergarten school year to test a child for gifted services because the children are more likely to qualify after having this formal school experience. If the child is tested in the school district, and does not qualify, retesting cannot occur until the following year, after twelve months have passed. Identifying in the spring allows the schools to schedule appropriate placement for the fall.

It is also important to know that the gifted tests used by school districts are designed for students who are at least five years old. The tests are evaluated based on the student's date of birth. If the student is not yet five years old when tested, the test will be evaluated as that of a five-year-old. Testing procedures and protocols do not allow us to make adjustments in evaluating the results. Psychologists have IQ tests they can use for children under the age of five. These IQ tests require administration by psychologists, and are not available to school districts for gifted identification purposes.

May I request that my child be given a specific ability test?

PV Schools administers two different ability tests that are included on the AZ State Approved Gifted Test List: the Cognitive Ability Test (CogAT) Form 6 is recommended for the general population. To ensure fairness to the district's ethnically diverse population, we administer the Naglieri NonVerbal Ability Test (NNAT), ML & NNAT2, to students whose primary language is not English, and for those who have

culturally diverse backgrounds. Based on the results of the CogAT, the school's Gifted Specialist might recommend that the student be tested on the NNAT during the next regularly scheduled testing period. This might be appropriate if the student scores in the 90's on the NonVerbal or Quantitative section of the CogAT. Please note that we cannot administer both tests during the same testing period.