Center for Talent Development

Northwestern
University's
Midwest Academic
Talent Search
(NUMATS)

Guide to Participation for Schools

Assessment for advanced students in grades 3 through 9 that

- Accurately identifies academic strengths and learning needs
- Determines the level of differentiation or acceleration required for growth
- Provides data and resources to support talent development



The Purpose of Northwestern University's Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS)

elping students reach their full potential is an important mission for educators. NUMATS assessments and resources help ensure educators have the tools to fulfill that mission for advanced learners.

By using above-grade-level assessments (PSAT™ 8/9 for students in grades 3-6 and SAT® or ACT® for students in grades 6-9), NUMATS offers a more nuanced profile of your advanced students' learning needs. When given as above-grade-level assessments to high-achieving students, the tests used in NUMATS reveal the type



INFORM

GUIDE

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NUMATS Overview

NUMATS provides access for students in grades 3 through 9 to assessments designed to measure high school, college and career readiness that are traditionally taken by older students. When these more challenging tests are given to younger students, they measure academic achievement, aptitude, and readiness for learning, which may include content significantly above-grade-level. This approach to assessment has been researched extensively and used with great success since Dr. Julian Stanley at Johns Hopkins University first developed the Talent Search model nearly 50 years ago.

Through NUMATS, students in grades 3 through 6 take the PSAT™ 8/9 and students in grades 7 through 9 (and the highest achieving students in grade 6) take the SAT® or ACT®. The results of these tests pinpoint what students know and are ready to learn. Given annually, the tests can also be used to monitor academic growth and the impact of programming.



Determining NUMATS Eligibility and Selecting the Appropriate Test

Eligibility

Students who are most likely to benefit from NUMATS are those in grades 3 through 9 who meet at least one of the criteria listed below:

- Participation in a school gifted program or advanced academic services;
- Recommendation from a parent or teacher because they demonstrate advanced aptitude in verbal or mathematical reasoning, demonstrate a high level of performance on academically demanding course work, or request more challenging experiences;
- Receive a score at the 90th percentile or above on either verbal/reasoning or math on a nationally normed achievement, ability, or aptitude test or score at the advanced level on a state achievement test; or
- Previously participated in Talent Search (NUMATS or similar program).

More details about eligibility are available on the <u>NUMATS website</u> in the Details section under Eligibility.

Appropriate Test for Grades 3-6

PSAT 8/9 is available to students in grades 3 through 6 who meet one of the eligibility criteria above. For students in grade 3, the PSAT 8/9 is 5 to 6 years above-grade-level. With that in mind, CTD recommends that that grade 3 students have a standardized test taking experience prior to NUMATS participation and at least one score in the 92nd percentile or above on a grade-level achievement or ability test.

The <u>I-Excel</u> test is another above-grade-level assessment option for students in grades 4 through 6. I-Excel is available to give locally to groups of students within your school or institution. There are no established national test dates or test locations for which individual test takers can register. See the next page for details about I-Excel and in the School or District Participation section.

Appropriate Test for Grades 7-9

The ACT and SAT tests are available to students in grades 7-9. Considerations for determining the appropriate test include the following:

- Does the state use the ACT or SAT as a required state assessment? It may be advantageous to have students test on a state administered assessment as an early benchmark.
- SAT is aligned with the PSAT 8/9, so if students have participated in PSAT 8/9 previously, SAT is an appropriate next step.
- The SAT consists of the following sections: Reading, Writing and Language, and Mathematics.
- The ACT consists of the following sections: Reading, English, Mathematics, and Science.
- Depending on how test results will be used, students could take
 the SAT one year and the ACT another year. Students could also
 take both tests in the same year. Given the differences in the
 structure and content of the tests, unique insights can be gained
 from each test.

For students in grade 9, it is important to note that their scores are subject to each agency's test score reporting policies. If you have questions about scores and reporting, particularly for your grade 9 students who may have questions about college admissions, we encourage you to reach out to the College Board or ACT.

Special Considerations for Grade 6 Students

Students in grade 6 have the option to take the PSAT 8/9, the SAT, or the ACT. Use the following information to decide which test is the best fit.

- First-time grade 6 NUMATS test takers who plan to test in the fall of the school year and who are scoring between the 90th and 94th percentile on grade-level assessments are recommended to take the PSAT 8/9.
- First-time grade 6 NUMATS test takers scoring at the 95th percentile or above on grade-level assessments are recommended to take SAT or ACT.
- First-time grade 6 NUMATS test takers testing during the late spring or summer of their grade 6 year are recommended to take SAT or ACT.
- Repeat grade 6 NUMATS test takers who attained the following scores on the PSAT 8/9 are recommended to take SAT or ACT:
 - At or above the 75th percentile in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW)
 - O At or above the 75th percentile in Math
 - OAt or above the 65th percentile in Total

Pathways to Participation in NUMATS

School or District Participation in NUMATS National Test Dates Grades 3-6:

 PSAT 8/9 national test date: School administrators can arrange to host the PSAT 8/9 on a national test date. National dates are held on a Saturday or Sunday morning during January and February. Sites can be limited to students from the school or district or can be open for any student in the area interested in taking the PSAT 8/9 through NUMATS.

Grades 6-9:

 Since the SAT and ACT are secure tests administered by the College Board and ACT, students will register to take an assessment at a local test center on a national test date. Many local high schools are SAT and ACT test sites and can accommodate NUMATS testers. As a convenience to families, schools/districts that want to have groups of students participate in NUMATS but do not have a national site nearby may apply to be a test center. Some restrictions apply. Inquire with NUMATS for more information.

School or District Participation in NUMATS In-House Administration (NUMATS for Schools)

School administrators can arrange to administer a NUMATS assessment on-site in your district, on a school-selected date and time. NUMATS staff will help facilitate the process of procuring the tests (I-Excel, PSAT 8/9 or SAT) directly from the vendor.



We will also help get all of your students registered via NUMATS. Access the NUMATS for Schools Document to learn more.

Fees for Testing

If schools are paying the cost for the NUMATS testing for students, arrangements will need to be made with NUMATS in advance for direct billing. At that time, directions will be provided for how to register students. Contact NUMATS for a price quote.

If schools DO NOT plan to cover the cost for NUMATS testing for students, parents will need to be provided with information about fees involved and how to register their students. NUMATS can provide you with a sample letter to guide parents through the process. Current fees for testing are posted on the NUMATS website at www.ctd.northwestern.edu/numats. Fee waivers are available on a first-come, first-served basis to qualified students.

Individual Families Participating in NUMATS

Even if schools or districts choose not to provide NUMATS to all of their advanced learners or limit group participation to specific grades, CTD asks that information about NUMATS be shared with families of all eligible students, so that parents can make an informed choice about the program. Schools can support the process in the following ways:

- Identify eligible students at each grade level,
- Send out a letter to parents (template available through NUMATS),
- Monitor registrations and access test results, if desired. Families register and pay directly with NUMATS. During the registration process, families will be asked if they would like to send test results to their child's school.

Seventy percent of NUMATS participants learn about the program through a contact at their school, and having access to the resources provided is a short- and long-term benefit to families. Please direct families to the NUMATS website and provide materials that describe the NUMATS program and process.

I-Excel (grades 4-6)

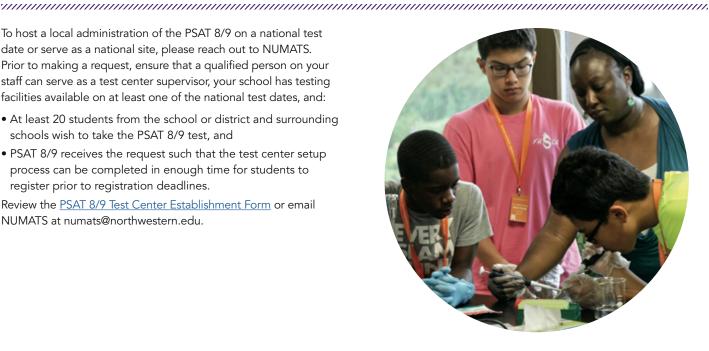
Center for Talent Development works collaboratively with the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa to help schools bring I-Excel testing and NUMATS resources to schools and families. Email NUMATS at numats@northwestern.edu to learn how you can set up I-Excel testing along with NUMATS resources.

Establishing a PSAT 8/9 administration site (Grades 3-6)

To host a local administration of the PSAT 8/9 on a national test date or serve as a national site, please reach out to NUMATS. Prior to making a request, ensure that a qualified person on your staff can serve as a test center supervisor, your school has testing facilities available on at least one of the national test dates, and:

- At least 20 students from the school or district and surrounding schools wish to take the PSAT 8/9 test, and
- PSAT 8/9 receives the request such that the test center setup process can be completed in enough time for students to register prior to registration deadlines.

Review the PSAT 8/9 Test Center Establishment Form or email NUMATS at numats@northwestern.edu.



Establishing an SAT or ACT administration site (Grades 6-9)

To serve as a national site for SAT or ACT, please reach out to NUMATS. Prior to making a request, ensure that a qualified person on your staff can serve as a test center supervisor, your school has testing facilities available on at least one of the national test dates, and:

For SAT:

- A group of students live a considerable distance from any of the test centers and
- SAT receives your request such that the test center setup process can be completed in enough time for students to register prior to registration deadlines.

Learn more or call SAT Test Administration at 800/257-5123 ext. 2.

For ACT:

- At least 35 students from your school anticipate testing (including students from area schools who would attend your test center) and
- ACT receives your request at least six weeks prior to the registration deadline for the test date you have chosen.

Learn more or call ACT Test Administration at 800/553-6244 ext. 1510.

Financial Aid/Fee Waivers

NUMATS offers need-based financial aid in the form of fee waivers for students who qualify for federally subsidized programs. Registrants, if registering individually, may request financial aid during the registration process by providing one of the forms of documenting need listed below. If schools or districts are covering the cost of NUMATS participation, waivers can be requested for the number of students who will be participating who meet the qualifications.

Students can provide documentation of financial need in the following ways:

- A letter stating a student meets the fee-waiver eligibility/free or reduced lunch criteria, written on school letterhead and signed by a school official. <u>View an example of a financial aid eligibility</u> letter.
- A copy of the front and back of a current Medicaid card with the child listed as a dependent.
- The first two pages of the family's most recent federal tax return with the child listed as a dependent; ensure that all Social Security information is blacked out.

Documentation must be submitted to NUMATS during the registration process.

Questions about free/reduced price lunch eligibility letters or other forms of documentation should be directed to NUMATS.

NUMATS registrants seeking financial aid may receive one or more of the following, depending on availability:

- NUMATS Fee Waiver Available on a first-come, first served basis to students registering for PSAT 8/9, SAT or ACT.
- Test Fee Waiver Available on a first-come, first-served basis for SAT and ACT only; College Board does not provide fee waivers for PSAT 8/9, but does discount the test fee for qualified students. Also, because students in grade 9 registering for SAT must do so in a two-step process, they will need to request a waiver directly from College Board.

Learn more about the <u>Jack Kent Cooke Young Scholars Program</u> and resources for high-ability students with financial need.



Registering Students

NUMATS utilizes an online application for the majority of applicants. The application is available at my.ctd.northwestern.edu.

School Pay Registrations

If your school will be paying the fees for NUMATS registrations, you will need to complete a School Payment Form prior to having students register online. The steps for School Pay registration are as follows:

- 1. Complete a <u>School Payment Form</u> and submit the list of students approved to test. Be sure to indicate which students are eligible for a fee waiver.
- 2. Once you have received confirmation that your School Payment Form has been processed, begin the student notification and registration process.
- Provide parents with the <u>NUMATS Family Guide</u> and <u>Registration Letter</u> (on the NUMATS web page under Educator Resources). You may want to host a parent meeting to introduce NUMATS, answer questions, and help parents with the registration process. Parents will need to register online at <u>my.ctd.northwestern.edu</u>. Contact NUMATS if you are

interested the possibility of having a NUMATS representative visit your school or district to meet with parents and/or staff (in person or virtually).

Family Pay Registrations

If parents will be paying the fees for NUMATS registrations, please provide the information necessary to complete the process. The steps in planning for individual family registration are as follows:

- Plan to host a parent meeting to introduce NUMATS, answer questions, and help parents begin the registration process.
 Contact NUMATS if you are interested the possibility of having a NUMATS representative visit your school or district to meet with parents and/or staff (in person or virtually).
- Provide parents with the <u>NUMATS Family Guide</u> and <u>Registration Letter</u> (on the NUMATS web page under Educator Resources).
- 3. Ensure qualified families with financial need are aware of fee waiver opportunities.
- 4. Parents will need to register online at my.ctd.northwestern.edu.



Test Dates, Locations, and Fees

See the chart below for this year's test dates, registration deadlines, and fees. These fees are for individual student registrations. If you plan to test more than 10 students, contact NUMATS for pricing. Please note that NUMATS registration deadlines may differ from test agency deadlines to accommodate processing time.

Locations

Test centers are available in many cities across the country. Locations may vary by test date, so be sure to have students explore options on different test dates. Look up the most current list of available test centers by state and date on the NUMATS website: ctd.northwestern.edu/numats-test-centers. If there is no location near your school or district, consider becoming a test center. For more information, email us at numats@northwestern.edu.

Test	Regular Registration Deadline	Late Registration Period ¹	Test Dates ²	NUMATS FEE	TEST FEE		TOTAL
I-Excel	Varies	Varies	TBD by School within test agency approved testing windows	\$45	\$45		\$90
PSAT 8/9	December 3, 2020	Not Available	January 9, 2021	\$45	\$38		\$83
	January 7, 2021		February 13, 2021				
	January 7, 2021		February 14, 2021				
SAT ³	September 3, 2020	Not Available through NUMATS. Call test center directly and purchase NUMATS only resources.	October 3, 2020	\$45 - -	Without Wit	\$68 With Essay	\$97 Without Essay
	October 7, 2020		November 7, 2020				\$113 With Essay
	November 4, 2020		December 5, 2020				
	February 11, 2021		March 13, 2021				
	April 8, 2021		May 8, 2021				
	May 5, 2021		June 5, 2021				
ACT ⁴	August 25, 2020	Not Available	September 12, 2020	\$45 - - -	\$55		\$100
	September 30, 2020		October 24, 2020				
	November 18, 2020		December 12, 2020				
	January 13, 2021		February 6, 2021				
	March 24, 2021		April 17, 2021				
	May 19, 2021		June 12, 2021				
	June 23, 2021		July 17, 2021				

¹ SAT charges a late fee of \$30. Families must register online or by phone directly with College Board.

² Non-Saturday test dates are available for students whose religious observance prohibits testing on Saturdays. Students must submit a letter from clergy to NUMATS. Dates and locations may vary depending on the state.

³ SAT Essay is optional and may be added in the NUMATS registration process. NUMATS percentiles are not provided.

⁴ACT Writing is optional and may be added by contacting the testing agency if the registration is completed by the regular deadline. Cost is \$15. NUMATS percentiles are not provided.

NUMATS Toolbox for School Coordinators

Each school or district that has students registered for NUMATS has access to an online NUMATS Toolbox to track registrations, review test scores, and access interpretive materials.

For help setting up a Toolbox account, or to see if your school already has an account, contact NUMATS at numats@northwestern.edu.

If you already have a Toolbox account, you should be able to log in with your user name and password each year. Forgotten passwords can be reset online at my.ctd.northwestern.edu.

Score Reports and Using NUMATS Data

Resources for Schools or Districts

The NUMATS Toolbox provides a variety of resources. In the Toolbox it is possible to

- Track student registrations (see complete and incomplete registration status);
- Help students prepare for their test date (test prep materials, what to bring on test day, who to contact for assistance, etc.);
- View and download student test scores (current year and previous years, downloadable to an Excel spreadsheet); and
- Access the annual statistical summary (for benchmarking student performance).

Resources for Students

The NUMATS program has made exciting updates to student level reporting in the Toolbox. By clicking on an individual student score report, it is possible to find:

- Test scale scores (composite/combined and sub-goal areas)
- Student NUMATS percentiles (comparing scale scores to other NUMATS participants who took the same test and are in the same grade)
- Learning statements aligned to scale scores (produced and aligned by test agencies)
- Program and placement guidance tied to percentiles
- Family Guide to understanding the scores

If a school system or coordinator is interested in learning more about the report features and how to use the data, please schedule a consultation at numats@northwestern.edu.

Other Comprehensive Center for Talent Development Services for Schools

Center for Talent Development (CTD) at Northwestern University is a leader in the field of gifted education, helping schools implement programs and services to identify and nurture exceptional talent in young people. Collaborating with CTD can help schools identify advanced academic potential in inclusive and equitable ways, create enriched and accelerated programs and services that meet students' needs, use assessment tools that effectively monitor and track growth and achievement for the highest achievers, and develop policies and procedures that reflect best practices and meet state requirements.

CTD School Services team members are available to work to develop a package that meets the needs of school systems, including the following services:

- Consulting (hourly or by project)
- Gifted program evaluation
- Professional learning (Gifted Education Boot Camp, custom workshops, etc.)
- Programming for students: Enrichment curriculum units; customizable enrichment and credit-bearing, accelerated online courses; service-learning and leadership experiences
- Policy development
- Assessment and growth monitoring

Contact a CTD School Services team member to discuss your needs

• Email: ctd-school-services@northwestern.edu

Contact NUMATS

Additional details about the NUMATS program and registration for testing is available in the Details section of the NUMATS web page at ctd.northwestern.edu/numats. For current school participants, resources and previous test score data are available by logging into your online Toolbox (my.ctd.northwestern.edu).

For questions or to arrange a consult with NUMATS representatives, please contact NUMATS:

- E-mail: <u>numats@northwestern.edu</u>
- **Phone:** 847/491-3782 ext. 2 (Monday Friday 8:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m. Central)



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