

Center for Talent Development

CTD Assessment

Guide for Families and Educators

Tools and resources to help students discover their academic potential and plan their talent development journey



Northwestern | CTD

Assessment to Inform Talent Development

Center for Talent Development (CTD) at Northwestern University has served as a leader in gifted education and talent development since 1982. CTD offers students age 4 through grade 12 research-based assessment, advanced programs and resources to enhance their schooling and nurture their talents.

CTD Assessment Begins A New Era: A Message from CTD Leadership

The pandemic has presented several challenges, but it has also inspired change. At CTD, though we had already begun re-envisioning our assessment services before the pandemic arrived, its near suspension of talent search testing gave us the opportunity to complete our transition.

We are excited to introduce you to CTD Assessment and our expanded repertoire of tests and resources to support the identification and nurturing of talent from early childhood through high school. CTD Assessment is now the official brand for on-grade-level assessment, above-grade-level assessment, and assessment for schools. We have retired the long-standing Northwestern University's Midwest Talent Search (NUMATS) name, but still provide the valuable research-supported tools and resources our clients have come to rely on and expect.

CTD Assessment offers a more diverse suite of offerings and platforms to meet the learning needs of students. This updated CTD Assessment Guide outlines all tests available, both on-grade-level and above-grade-level, for the 2021-22 assessment year.

We are proud of our 40-year history of providing above-grade-level assessment and talent development guidance through NUMATS, and we look forward to all the new families and schools we will be able to serve in the years to come.

Yours in Education,

Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Director
Susan Corwith, Associate Director
Melissa Hinshaw, Assessment Coordinator



CTD Assessment has served over **500,000** students since its inception.



A score at the 95th percentile on a grade-level test demonstrates success. But what it doesn't tell you is what your child is ready to learn next. CTD provides the information you need to offer appropriate challenges.

CTD PARENT

The Purpose of CTD Assessment

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

CTD Assessment provides access to on-grade-level tests for students age 4 through grade 9 who need a measure academic ability and achievement aligned to their age or grade in school. CTD also provides above-grade-level testing for students in grades 2 through 9 to identify advanced abilities in core areas of learning, demonstrate mastery of learning standards, and assess readiness for enrichment or acceleration.

The assessment results and corresponding resources provided by CTD help educators and parents make well-informed decisions about programs and services and plan long-term for their students' talent development. Given annually, above-grade-level tests can also be used to monitor academic growth and the impact of programming.

Assessment Options Through Center for Talent Development

CTD offers both on-grade-level and above-grade-level assessment. On-grade-level assessment is best for young learners and other students new to standardized testing or for students who need to understand their abilities and achievement as compared to age or grade-level peers and on grade-level aligned content. On-grade-level test options include:

- [Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement \(KTEA-3\)](#)
- [Measures of Academic Progress \(MAP\)](#)
- [Cognitive Abilities Test™ \(CogAT®\)](#)

Above-grade-level assessment is best for students who are already demonstrating high achievement or advanced abilities and who may need fast-paced, high-level enrichment or acceleration to meet their learning needs and develop their talents fully. Above-grade-level test options include:

- [PSAT™ 8/9](#)
- [SAT®](#)
- [ACT®](#)
- [Iowa Assessments™](#)
- [Cognitive Abilities Test™ \(CogAT®\)](#)

The following pages describe each test and eligibility criteria in more detail.



On-Grade-Level Assessment (Age 4-Grade 9)

Tests available on-grade-level through CTD Assessment are aligned to the grade in which the student is rostered. The data provided through these tests help assess:

- how students are performing compared to their same age or same grade peers,
- areas of strength relative to grade-level peers and the content of the test,
- eligibility for supplemental educational activities, including some programs at CTD.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

Ages/Grade Levels and Format:

- **Age 4-Grade 9, Online/Remote Administration**

MAP is an online, adaptive assessment that measures academic achievement and readiness for instruction. MAP's robust norms provide comparisons to same-grade peers. At CTD, we offer MAP to help families establish a student's eligibility for CTD programs, measure academic readiness, and if taken more than once, measure growth over time.

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)

Ages/Grade Levels and Format:

- **Age 4, in-person, One-to-One Administration**
- **K-Grade 1, Online/Remote Administration**

The CogAT assesses a student's learned reasoning and problem solving abilities through a battery of verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal test items. CogAT provides both grade and age norms to compare students to their peers. At CTD, we offer CogAT on-grade level to help families establish a student's eligibility for CTD programs and better understand a student's aptitude for learning.

Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA-3)

Ages/Grade Levels and Format:

- **Age 4-Grade 3, in-person, One-to-One Administration**

KTEA-3 is an individually administered measure of academic achievement that evaluates key reading/language and math skills. At CTD, we offer KTEA-3 to help families establish a student's eligibility for CTD programs and measure academic readiness.

All on-grade-level assessment details, including test dates and fees, are available [online](#).



Above-Grade-Level Assessment (Grades 2-9)

Through the use of above-grade-level assessments, CTD offers a more nuanced profile of advanced students' learning needs. When more challenging tests (those designed for older students) are given to younger students, they measure academic achievement, aptitude, and readiness for learning, which may include content significantly above their current grade in school.

Above-grade-level testing, also known as Talent Search, has been used successfully and researched extensively since Dr. Julian Stanley at Johns Hopkins University first started using it nearly 50 years ago. The tests provide insight into the following:

- Areas of academic strength,
- What type and level of instruction is appropriate,
- What supplemental educational activities may be beneficial.

PSAT 8/9

Grade Levels: 3-6

Format:

- **In-person, paper and pencil test offered at select sites administered by CTD OR through schools as part of a collaboration between the school and CTD Assessment**

The PSAT 8/9, developed by College Board for students in grades 8 and 9, is aligned to Common Core, college readiness standards, and the SAT for grades 11 and 12. It assesses the abilities of students in reading, writing and language (English) and math. At CTD, we offer PSAT above-grade level to help families and educators understand how students perform compared to older peers; to see how performance compares advanced learners of the same age using CTD custom norms; and to determine readiness for enrichment, acceleration or score-based programming.

SAT

Grade Levels: 6-9

Format:

- **For students under age 13 or those looking for an online option - Official SAT Practice test available online by Khan Academy and proctored by CTD.**
- **For students age 13 and up - Official SAT administered in-person, paper and pencil at national test administration sites.**
- **For CTD school partners (students grades 6-9) - Official SAT administered in-person, paper and pencil, during SAT testing days.**

SAT, authored by the College Board, is typically used for college admissions and as a state-level high school proficiency measure. Though designed for students in grades 11 and 12, organizations like CTD administer the SAT to advanced students in grades 6 through 9 to get a more accurate picture of their abilities and readiness for accelerative programs. The SAT includes a Reading Test, a Writing and Language Test, and a Math Test. There is an optional essay portion.

ACT

Grade Levels: 6-9

Format:

- **Age 13 and up – Official ACT taken in-person at national test administration sites**
- **Students under age 13 (available February of 2022) – Official ACT taken in-person at national test administration sites**

ACT is a college and career readiness achievement test aligned to Common Core standards. Though designed for students in grades 11 and 12, organizations like CTD administer the ACT to advanced students in grades 6 through 9 to get a more accurate picture of their abilities and readiness for accelerative programs. Subtests include English, Reading, Math, and Science and an optional writing test.



Iowa Assessments (New in 2021-22)

Grade Levels: 3-9

Format: Online, remote

The Iowa Assessments are a college and career readiness, content aligned achievement tests that are typically given to students to measure proficiency at one, specific grade level. At CTD, we offer the Iowa Assessments above-grade level to help families and educators understand how students perform compared to older peers; to see how performance compares advanced learners of the same age using CTD custom norms; and to determine readiness for enrichment, acceleration or score-based programming. For students in grades 3-6, the test is administered two grade levels above current rostered grade. For students in grades 7-9, the grade 11/12 grade aligned test is administered.

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)

Grade Levels: 2-9

Format: Online, Remote

The CogAT is a test that assesses a student's learned reasoning and problem solving abilities through a battery of verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal test items. CogAT provides both grade and age norms to compare students to their same-age peers and above-grade peers. At CTD, we offer CogAT above-grade level to help families understand how students perform compared to older peers and inform readiness for enrichment or acceleration or score-based programming.

Determining Above-Grade-Level Assessment Eligibility

Students who are most likely to benefit from above-grade assessment are those in grades 2 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).

*NUMATS-Northwestern University's Midwest Academic Talent Search is now CTD Above-Grade-Level Assessment.

All above-grade-level assessment details, including test dates and fees, are available [online](#).

Registration:

For Families - Once you have identified the desired assessment for your student, register online at <https://my.ctd.northwestern.edu>.

For Schools - CTD offers a variety of ways for schools to partner with CTD Assessment. Contact CTD Assessment to discuss the available options: ctd-assessment@northwestern.edu.



Contact Us

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