

## **GT Universal Screener Frequently Asked Questions for Parents**

### **Why are we administering a Universal Screener?**

A universal screener is a way to systematically identify exceptional potential and hidden talent among all populations, including English Language Learners, students with special needs and those who may not be achieving on other traditional academic measures. Using a universal screener is considered a best practice in the field of gifted education. The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) recognizes the importance of this in their *Gifted Programming Standards*, and the majority of districts in the Metro area have been administering a universal screener in the primary grades for years. The recently passed House Bill 1102 (2014) had the implementation of a universal screener “no later than second grade” as one of its primary attributes.

### **What is the NNAT?**

The Naglieri Non-verbal Abilities Test (NNAT2) uses progressive matrices to allow for a culturally neutral evaluation of students’ nonverbal reasoning and general problem-solving ability, regardless of the individual student’s primary language, education, culture or socioeconomic background. The NNAT-2 measures “general ability or intelligence (‘g’), which allows people to solve a variety of problems. “General ability is the foundation for all activities we do in our daily lives” (Naglieri, Brulles, Lansdowne p 5). The NNAT-2 is an *ability test*, which is different from an *achievement test*, like MAP, TCAP or PARCC.

### **Why do this at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade?**

The guidelines in House Bill 1102 (see above) stated that a universal screener should be administered no later than 2nd grade. Early identification of gifted potential is important for effective interventions (and is listed as a NAGC best practice), yet waiting until 2nd grade allows for students to mature in an academic setting, which will lead to more valid and reliable testing results.

### **Why did we choose the NNAT over other available instruments?**

The NNAT-2 is a well recognized instrument by an expert in the field (Jack Naglieri); published by Pearson. It has test administration time of only 30 minutes, completed in single session, making efficient use of valuable instructional time. The test is normed to students’ birth dates and has a minimal linguistic and cultural load.

### **What does this mean for my child?**

Adams 12 is using the NNAT-2 as a *universal screener* for Gifted/Talented (GT) identification. The majority of school districts in Colorado use a universal screener to identify high potential among all student populations in the hopes of identifying and developing hidden talent. If a student scores at or near the 95th percentile on this test, they may be referred for the gifted identification process, where additional information would be gathered, including parent and teacher input, achievement (like MAP, PARCC and/or TCAP scores, among others) and demonstrated performance in an area of strength.

### **Will their performance on this test impact promotion, graduation, etc?**

As this test is only a measure of cognitive *ability*, not *achievement*, it would not have any impact on a student’s grade promotion, retention or graduation. The test is intended as one component for gifted identification.

**How should I prepare my child for this exam?**

There is nothing special you need to do other than be sure they are well-rested and well-fed so they can show us their best thinking. They will get an idea of what the test questions are like during school before the test.

**What does this mean for potential GT identification?**

This test could make up one component of a whole body of evidence for GT identification. We look at multiple components in this body of evidence, including achievement, behavioral characteristics, demonstrated performance and other ability measures when making GT identification decisions. The NNAT could give us valuable information about a student's cognitive ability and let us know if we should be gathering additional information.

**What if my child scores below the average range?**

This is not necessarily cause for concern, but it may be worth pursuing with your child's teacher or other people at the school who know your child well. We would want to compare that with other data, including achievement scores, how your child is doing in class, etc., to see if we need to gather more data.

Discussing the NNAT-2 with your student:

Below are some potential questions that may come up from your student:

**Why are we taking this test?**

This is going to be a fun test that lets us better understand how you solve problems.

**What is the test like?**

There won't be any reading or numbers, but you will see a lot of pictures, shapes and puzzles. There will be about 48 questions, and you may answer the first few quickly. The problems get more challenging and fun as you go along. You only have about 30 minutes, so don't spend too much time on any one problem, but try to do your best thinking in the time you have.

**Do we need to study for this test or practice?**

No, you do not need to study for this test. Just do your best thinking and have fun with the puzzles. Some of them can be really challenging, which makes them more fun to figure out.

**What if I don't know the answers?**

That's ok. Just make your best choice on each one and you can go on to the next question.

**What if I don't finish in time?**

That's ok, too. Some students will finish early, others will finish right on time, and others may not get all the way through before the test ends. Just try to do your best thinking on each one. You will be able to see where you are on each question -- it will say 'Question 32 out of 48'.

**What if I finish early?**

That's ok, too. Don't try to rush through the test without really thinking about each question, but if you finish before others you can wait quietly while the rest of the class finishes. Don't worry about comparing yourself to others -- we want to see how *you* think.

Source: *Helping All Gifted Children Learn: A Teacher's Guide to Using the NNAT2*, Naglieri, Brulles, Lansdowne, 2008