

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: How do I interpret percentile ranks?**

A: Percentile ranks are typically interpreted as follows:

- The percentile rank of 50 is identified as average, or mean performance.
- Percentile ranks between the 16<sup>th</sup> - 84<sup>th</sup> percentiles represent average performance.
- Percentile ranks between the 85<sup>th</sup> and 89<sup>th</sup> percentiles represent above average performance.
- Percentile ranks between the 90<sup>th</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> percentile represent superior performance.
- Percentile ranks above the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile represent very superior performance.

### **Q: What are the specific criteria for eligibility as a student who is academically gifted (i.e., qualifies for the Spectrum program)?**

- Performance in at least two of the three areas on the CogAT meets or exceeds established thresholds. For students tested as kindergarten and first graders, the threshold is the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile; for all other grades, the threshold is the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- Performance in academic achievement as follows:
  - For students tested as kindergarten and first graders: achievement is not considered as part of the eligibility determination.
  - For students tested as second through fourth graders: achievement in both reading *and* mathematics meets or exceeds the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile rank threshold.
  - For students tested as fifth through seventh graders: achievement in reading *and/or* mathematics meets or exceeds the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile rank threshold.
- The majority of the teacher input ratings are in the categories of “advanced compared to same-aged peer.”
- Student has the capability for thriving in an environment that provides a rigorous and accelerated curriculum.

### **Q: What are the specific criteria for eligibility as a student who is academically highly gifted (i.e., qualifies for both the Accelerated Progress Program and Spectrum program)?**

- Performance in at least two of the three areas on the CogAT meets or exceeds the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile rank threshold.
- Performance in both reading and mathematics achievement meets or exceeds the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile rank threshold.
- The majority of the teacher input ratings are in the category of “significantly advanced compared to same-aged peers.”
- Student has the capability for thriving in an environment that provides a rigorous and significantly accelerated curriculum.

### **Q: What does it mean when my student earned a “0” in a test area?**

A: A “0” score is given when the student did not complete enough items for the test section to be scored. Some students find the test to be too difficult while other students become fatigued.

### **Q: Will achievement and cognitive results be shared with my child’s teacher?**

A: Only achievement scores will be shared with your teacher.

### **Q: Can I challenge the eligibility decision through an appeal?**

A: Yes. Our office only considers written appeals. All appeal decisions are final.

### **Q: Should I appeal?**

A: Most families with lower-than-expected results do not appeal. If your child is doing well in school and is enjoying and thriving in his/her current experience, you probably shouldn’t bother. If however, you believe your child’s performance is in the superior to very superior range in comparison to peers, you may want to consider making an appeal. To appeal, parents/teachers must provide compelling evidence that supports the student’s eligibility as a student who is academically gifted or academically highly gifted. This means that the additional information you provide must strongly support that your child is gifted/highly gifted and will thrive in an environment that presents a rigorous reading and mathematics curriculum at an accelerated learning pace that is one to two grade levels above their current grade assignment.

### **Q: What do I need to do to appeal?**

A: You will need to provide compelling information by your appeal due date that makes the case that your child actually has capabilities equal to those of students found eligible. Be aware that different due dates are established for different student groups. We must receive your appeal, in writing, by the date indicated in your letter. Compelling information might include (a) additional achievement and/or cognitive testing results, (b) support letters describing the student’s achievement in the classroom, and/or (c) curriculum-based assessments completed in the classroom. The documentation you provide MUST support that your child’s intellectual/cognitive skills AND academic achievement are at the levels described above for the program for which you are appealing.

### **Q: If I’m considering outside testing, what do I need to do?**

A: Our website provides specific information related to finding qualified testers, the types of tests that would be considered, and exactly how to submit your appeal document. <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/advlearning/index.xml> If you are not able to access our website, this information is available on our phone tree by dialing 206-252-0130.

### **Q: If my student qualifies for free/reduced lunch, will the district assist me with in-house, district testing?**

A: Yes. You should provide to our office (a) a signed statement that you are submitting an in-house, district appeal and (b) information that supports the case that your child meets program eligibility requirements by the due date indicated on your letter. Advanced Learning staff will work with you in addressing your appeal if it is received by the date listed on your letter.

### **Q: How is the appeal decision made?**

A: A committee reviews the evidence you submit, alongside district information, to make the final determination of eligibility.