

## How to talk to your child about assessment for the Quest program

Here are some questions students might ask.

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While not all students will be identified as gifted. All children are gifts. It is important that this be a positive experience for your child. If there are any questions or concerns your child has about this assessment please contact: Rob Nosbush, Gifted Services Coordinator, [RNosbush@bhmschools.org](mailto:RNosbush@bhmschools.org) or 763-682-8766

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### **Why am I doing this assessment?**

Rather than saying “You are so smart,” speak of the assessment in terms of finding how her mind makes connections. To be so smart can be a burden and is sometimes hard for a student to understand what smart even means.

The assessment which is being done for the Quest program is to find out what types of needs a student has for learning. In some cases, a child’s specialized needs require an accommodation such as the Quest program. Most students do not need such an accommodation. Although the subject knowledge is important, students recommended for the Quest program make connections with that knowledge in a different way than other students. It is for this reason that the Quest program might be recommended.

Regardless of what is found during the assessment, the data collected is shared with the classroom teacher in order to be sure your child continues to grow in whatever BHM classroom in which she is part. The recommendation team places each student in a classroom best suited to her needs. This classroom may or may not be part of the Quest program depending on the student. ([back to top](#))

### **Where am I doing this assessment?**

Testing is completed during separate sessions at his own building. For most students the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is the only extra assessment done. First grade students will also need to complete the FastBridge aReading/aMath tests. ([back to top](#))

### **How long will this assessment take?**

Each of the three parts of the CogAT will take approximately 40 minutes. A [schedule of testing days](#) will be sent home with your child. First grade students will also complete the FastBridge aReading/aMath tests. This is an untimed test and will depend on the student. ([back to top](#))

### **How will I do the test?**

Testing will be done on the computer in order for results to be processed more quickly. ([back to top](#))

### **Who else will be doing the assessment?**

The number of students who are assessed at each building varies depending on the number of students who have requested assessment. Typically the older and younger students are split into separate groups in order to keep group sizes small. ([back to top](#))

### **What should I tell other students when asked about the testing?**

Students are naturally curious. When a classmate is absent or called out of class, other students will ask why. The assessment gives their next teacher information about the way they think and learn so students can simply say, "I am doing some testing to see how I learn." ([back to top](#))

### **Did I "pass or fail" the test?**

The information gathered will be shared with your child's next teacher regardless of their recommended placement in the Quest program or other classroom. This is a wonderful way to share with your child why the assessment is being done while not raising anxiety. Some children may feel they "failed," because the recommended placement was not in the Quest program. Either way, this assessment will influence instruction next year. ([back to top](#))

The recommendation team looks at a portfolio of information, all of which help to give a picture of your child. Placement in the program is not recommended from just one test score

Parent perceiver - Completed by a parent, gives the home perspective on how a student shows different characteristics of giftedness.

Teacher perceiver - Similar to the continuum the parent completes but offers how the gifted characteristics appear in the classroom.

FastBridge aReading/aMath test - This is given to all BHM students beginning in grade two. (And 1st grade students requesting assessment for the Quest program). This test is a [computer adaptive](#) test. This shows a student's knowledge as compared to others who are the same age and took the same test.

CogAT - The CogAT measures general reasoning abilities in three domains: [verbal](#), [quantitative](#), and [nonverbal](#). ([back to top](#))

### **I receive special services, does that mean I can't be in Quest?**

The Quest program is an accommodation for students who make connections with that knowledge in a different way than other students. The same student may also receive some other services (speech, Special Education etc.). Regardless of the type of services, it does not play a factor in being recommended for the Quest program. It is important that we are aware of the types of services that your child receives for planning purposes to ensure that your child's needs are met. ([back to top](#))

### **Do I have to study for the CogAT?**

The CogAT is unlike a classroom test which measures if a student has learned the information presented in class. This measures reasoning skills such as a student's ability to: comprehend problem situations, detect similarities and differences, make inferences, make deductions, classify and categorize objects, events, and other stimuli, create and adapt problem-solving strategies, as well as, use familiar concepts and skills in new contexts. [Examples of the types of questions asked can be found here.](#) [\(back to top\)](#)

### **What would I do if I "pass" the test?**

It's important to remember two points.

Placement in the program is not recommended from just one test score.

The information gathered will be shared with your child's next teacher regardless of their recommended placement in the Quest program or other classroom. Since many students will remain in their current elementary school, don't worry about the discussion of entering the Quest program until your child has had that recommendation made by the team. Also, the recommendation team looks at a portfolio of information, all of which help to give a picture of your child.

If a child is recommended for placement in the program, the Quest program is located at Parkside Elementary (grades 2-5), Buffalo Community Middle School (grades 6-8), and at Buffalo High School (grade 9). Siblings of students in the elementary program may choose to open-enroll at Parkside as well. Shuttles from all of the elementary schools provide transportation for the Quest program, Discovery Elementary and the STEM program at Tatanka Elementary. [\(back to top\)](#)

## *Definitions*

**Computer-adaptive tests** are designed to adjust their level of difficulty—based on the responses provided—to match the knowledge and ability of a test taker. If a student gives a wrong answer, the computer follows up with an easier question; if the student answers correctly, the next question will be more difficult. ([back to previous location](#))

The **CogAT Verbal battery** is used to assess a student’s vocabulary, efficiency and verbal memory, ability to determine word relationships, and the ability to comprehend ideas. The CogAT Verbal test is comprised of three sub-tests. For lower levels, these sub-tests are: Sentence Completion, Picture Classification, and Picture Analogies. For higher levels, these three sub-tests are: Sentence Completion, Verbal Classification, and Verbal Analogies. These three sub-tests combined make up the CogAT Verbal score. ([back to previous location](#))

The **CogAT Quantitative battery** assesses students’ quantitative reasoning and problem solving abilities. This section also evaluates the students’ level of abstract reasoning. The CogAT Quantitative Battery is comprised of three subtests: Number Series, Number Puzzles, and Number Analogies. These three subtests combined make up the CogAT Quantitative score. ([back to previous location](#))

The **CogAT Nonverbal battery** is used to assess a student’s reasoning abilities through the use of spatial and figural content. The subtests use geometric shapes and figures which have unlikely been seen by the students in their formal schooling. There is no reading required among the questions in the CogAT Nonverbal test. These three subtests are: Figure Matrices, Paper Folding, and Figure Classification. These three subtests combined make up the CogAT Nonverbal score. ([back to previous location](#))