

Center for Talent Development

Northwestern
University's
Midwest Academic
Talent Search
(NUMATS)

Student Guide for the 2020 Testing Year

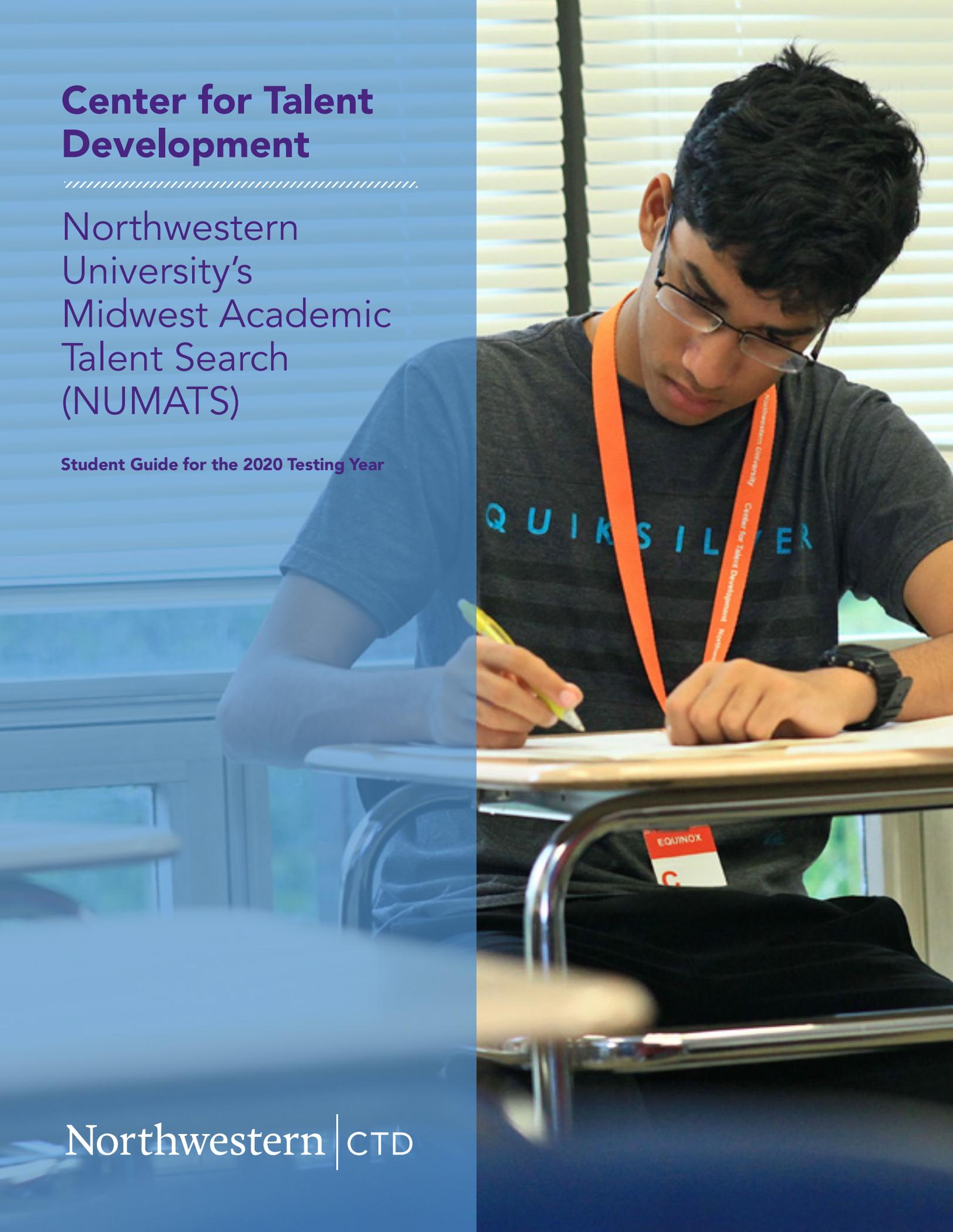


Table of Contents

Contact Information	1
Just for Students	2
What do I need to know about the test I am taking?	3
How am I likely to score on the test I have chosen to take?	4
Before My Test Day	5
On My Test Day	6
During My Test	7
After My Test	8
Just for Parents	9
Test-Score Reporting and Materials	10
Recommendations	11
NUMATS Resources	12



Center for Talent Development has been accredited as a nonpublic supplementary school by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) since April 1, 1994. NCA CASI is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and has more than 100 years of experience in improving educational quality.

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is an organization of parents, teachers, educators, other professionals, and community

leaders who unite to address the unique needs of children and youth with demonstrated gifts and talents as well as those children who may be able to develop their talent potential with appropriate educational experiences

Visit the NAGC website to join this organization and add your name to the ranks of supporters working to raise awareness of the needs of gifted learners nationwide. In an age of accountability, states and schools are demanding growth for all children which should include yearly growth for gifted students. Now is the time to act. Learn more at www.nagc.org.

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Just for Students

Welcome, students! Congratulations on qualifying for Northwestern University's Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS). By registering for NUMATS and PSAT 8/9™, SAT®, or ACT®, you have decided to learn more about your abilities, which can help you make more informed choices about your education.

This guide will get you started. It provides information about each test and what to expect on test day and beyond. It also provides guidance on how to prepare for the testing experience and what to do while testing. Read it carefully and well before your test date. Make certain to read it along with the booklet provided by the testing agency.



Remember that when it comes to tests, familiarity leads to calmness and confidence. The more familiar you are with your test's structure, question formats, and time limits, the more relaxed you'll be and the better you'll do. So make time to take the practice test in the testing agency guide under conditions like those of the actual testing situation, i.e., with seriousness and observing time limits. You probably will not know all the answers, and that is okay! Do not cram or try to learn new content for the test. Just show what you know and do your best!

What do I need to know about the test I am taking?

The testing agencies provide a guide for each test. All are available in the NUMATS Info section of the online MyCTD Toolbox at my.ctd.northwestern.edu. These guides include a practice test or practice questions as well as more test-specific information about:

- Section content and time limits
- Question types and sample questions
- Calculator usage
- Test preparation guidelines
- Test day expectations
- Test-taking strategies
- Scoring

You can also find helpful information on the test agency websites, including tips and sample questions.

College Board website (PSAT 8/9 and SAT): collegeboard.org

ACT website: act.org

Identify the test you've chosen to take and look down the corresponding column for information about your test.

	PSAT 8/9	SAT	ACT
NUMATS registrants	Grades 3–6	Grades 6–9	Grades 6–9
Testing agency	College Board	College Board	ACT
Designed for	Grades 8-9	Grades 11-12	Grades 11-12
Used for	High school placement	College entrance	College entrance
Developed to measure	College and career readiness	College and career readiness	College prep curriculum
Required sections	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, Math	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, Math	English, Math, Reading, Science
Optional section	None	Essay ¹	Writing ²

¹ If you have chosen to take SAT, you made a decision on whether to include this optional section in the online registration process. Including the Essay increased your test fee.

² If you have chosen to take ACT and wish to include the Writing Test, call ACT at 319-337-1270 to register and pay the additional fee. Your call should occur no earlier than two weeks after completing your NUMATS registration, but no later than ACT's late registration deadline for the test date you have chosen.



NUMATS is a very good experience not just because you have the affirmation of your success, but because you can see the future opportunities available to you.

NUMATS STUDENT

How am I likely to score on the test I have chosen to take?

You are in the top 10 percent of students in your grade level; we know that you're smart. But you will be taking a test designed for students much older than you. You may get a score that is lower than you're used to. It's okay even if you get a zero. What you're trying to find out is how far above grade level you are and in which areas so that you can determine what your next steps need to be. How will that happen?

After you take the test, your score will be included in a NUMATS database that contains scores from all the other high-achieving students who have taken the same test in the past two years. We use this database to calculate percentiles so you can see how your scores compare with those of other students in your grade

level who have taken the same test as you. This interpretive information, along with other NUMATS resources, will help you, your parents, and your teachers understand the kind of learning experiences you need to reach full potential.

By the way, all these resources are available online in the MyCTD Toolbox at my.ctd.northwestern.edu. Additional resources are also available in CTD Backpack™, CTD's interactive, online community for gifted students and their parents at ctd.schoolology.com. Be sure to explore these sites. You'll see all the cool stuff there is for you to learn and do. Remember, it's not about the test score; it's about being challenged at the right level.

What do I need to know about how the mandatory sections of the tests are scored?

	PSAT 8/9™	SAT®	ACT®
What types of questions are included?	Multiple-choice, student-produced response	Multiple-choice, student-produced response	Multiple-choice
How are questions scored?	One point added for each correct answer and no points subtracted for wrong answers	One point added for each correct answer and no points subtracted for wrong answers	One point added for each correct answer and no points subtracted for wrong answers
Should I guess if I'm not sure of the answer to a question?	Yes	Yes	Yes
What are the lowest to highest scores I can earn?	6-36 in Reading AND Writing and Language 120-720 in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing AND Math 240-1440 Total	10-40 in Reading AND Writing and Language 200-800 in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing AND Math 400-1600 Total	1-36 on each section, as well as overall composite

Where can I find more information about test scores and preparing for the test?

More information on test scores and subscores as well as how to interpret them is included in the MyCTD Toolbox. Click on the NUMATS Info tab and scroll down to section 2, Prepare for the Test, to download testing agency guides or to section 4, Understand Your Test Score, to download the NUMATS Statistical Summary. Once you receive your test scores, you will have learning statements and guidance on your Assessment Results and Planning page of your MyCTD Toolbox.

Before My Test Day

How can I prepare for the test?

- Read the test preparation booklet provided by the testing agency.
- Pay particular attention to item types and suggested test-taking strategies.
- Become familiar with test directions and the answer sheet. Knowing what to expect will give you more time on the actual test.
- Find out how many questions will be in each section of the test and think about how to budget your time efficiently. For example if a section has 40 questions to be completed in 1 hour, you should try to finish 10 questions every 15 minutes.
- Take the practice test or review the practice questions at least one week prior to your test date.
- Go over all your answers, both right and wrong.
- Realize that there will be difficult questions on the test and you probably will not know all the answers. That's okay. Just make your best guess and keep going.



What else do I need to know and do before I test?

- Ensure that you have received your **test center admission ticket**. If you have not received it a week before your test date, call the testing agency:

PSAT 8/9™ 844-806-7817

SAT® 866-756-7346

ACT® 319-337-1270

- SAT® and ACT® test takers also ensure that you have or obtain a required form of student identification:

SAT® (grades 6-8): SAT® Student Identification Form (completed by parent and student)

SAT® (grade 9): Current (valid) official photo ID

ACT® (all grades): ACT® Talent Search Student Identification Form (completed by student and parent)

- Forms and more detailed instructions are available in the online MyCTD Toolbox at my.ctd.northwestern.edu. Click on the NUMATS Info tab and scroll down to section 3 – Day of the Test.
- Gather all the materials you will need for testing (admission ticket, ID form if required, pencils, erasers, calculator, batteries, watch, and snack).
- Be sure you know how to get to your test center and where the entrance is.
- Estimate travel time so you arrive a little early.
- Depending on the test center, being one of the first students checked in may give you more seating choices, e.g., at the end of a row, near the front, near the back.

Review arrival time, duration, and break information provided below.

	PSAT 8/9™	SAT®	ACT®
Arrive at test center no later than	7:45 a.m.	7:45 a.m.	8:00 a.m.
Testing lasts approximately	3½-4 hours	4-5 hours	4- 4½ hours
Break(s) allowed	Two five minutes (Test administrator may increase length of time if needed.)	One 10 minutes One five minutes	One 10-15 minutes

On My Test Day

How do I need to get ready on my test day?

- Relax the night before and get a good night's sleep.
- Set your alarm and have a backup alarm as well.
- Give yourself plenty of time to get ready, eat breakfast, and get to the testing center without having to rush.
- Have a good breakfast but avoid heavy foods that can make you groggy.

How can I expect to feel?

- Expect and accept some stress. It's normal to get nervous.
- The adrenaline boost you get from being a little bit nervous can actually be helpful.

What do I need to take to the test center?

- Test center admission ticket
- Student ID Form or photo ID as required (SAT® and ACT® only)
- At least two sharpened No. 2 pencils with good erasers
- An approved calculator with fresh batteries
- A watch to pace yourself
- A light, nutritious snack to eat during break(s)... avoid salty foods that will make you thirsty later in the session
- A sweater/sweatshirt so you can be comfortable regardless of room temperature



During My Test

How can I be sure to do my best?

- Go to the bathroom before walking into the exam room.
- Turn off cell phones and watch alarms.
- Sit comfortably.
- Stay focused and relaxed. If you find yourself clenching any part of your body, take some deep, slow breaths or wiggle your fingers and toes.
- Avoid distractions and ignore those around you.
- Listen closely to all instructions. If anything seems unclear, just ask the test administrator to explain.
- Read any written directions and be sure you know what you are being asked to do.
- Focus on what you know and on answering each question individually.
- Pace yourself by occasionally glancing at your watch and make certain to use all the allotted time. Others may finish before you... don't let that distract you.
- Keep your eyes on your own test booklet and answer sheet. You don't want to appear to be cheating and cause unnecessary trouble for yourself.
- Complete all sections of the test. Your test will not be scored unless you do.

What are some tips for answering multiple-choice questions?

- Read the whole question and all the answer choices carefully.
- Use the process of elimination. Start by crossing out any answer choices that just can't be right. Then consider the possible correct choices before selecting your answer. If you've got it down to two options, make an educated guess.
- Mark only one answer for each question and ensure that you are marking that answer for the correct question in the correct section of your answer sheet. Fill in ovals completely.
- If you're unsure of an answer, you can skip over it and come back to it later (as long as it is within the section for which you are currently being timed). Just make certain you keep your place on the answer sheet.
- Use your test booklet for scratch work, to cross out answers you know are wrong, and to mark questions you want to return to later.
- If you have time left when you are finished with the section being timed, look over that section. Make sure you have answered all questions and that all answers are in the right place. Erase any stray marks.

- Change an answer only if you misread or misinterpreted the question. Your first answer is usually the correct one. Go with your gut and don't second-guess yourself.
- If you do change an answer, be sure to erase completely.
- Points are not subtracted for wrong answers, so you can guess and not be penalized.

SAT Essay or ACT Writing Test Takers — What are some tips for completing essay questions?

- Read the questions/prompts carefully and determine what you are being asked to write about. For example, don't give an opinion if you're asked for facts.
- Make an outline or use another type of graphic organizer to plan out what you are going to write about. This will help you write an essay that is more organized and fluid.
- Avoid writing a long introduction and conclusion. Use the bulk of your time to respond to the question asked or prompt provided.
- Focus on one main idea per paragraph and remember, the more supporting details, examples, and facts you include, the higher your score is likely to be.
- Use approximations if you don't know an exact date or number.
- Proofread and watch out for careless mistakes... they can take away from the overall content.
- Write legibly. If it's hard to read, it's harder to grade.

Where can I find additional information?

For more ideas on how to prepare for and take tests, check out the following websites:

kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/school/testing_tips.html

educationcorner.com/test-taking-strategies.html

scholastic.com/teachers/article/master-multiple-choice

teachervision.fen.com/study-skills/teaching-method/6390.html

testtakingtips.com/test

Third-Party Websites: CTD's website and CTD program and course materials may refer to third-party websites. Staff members review such websites for inappropriate content before referencing them. However, because web content continuously changes and is not controlled by CTD, CTD disclaims responsibility for the content contained on third-party websites. If you become aware of anything that may be inappropriate, please notify CTD staff immediately.

After My Test

You've done your best ... now relax!

Please know that the NUMATS team is very proud of you for taking on this challenge, and we wish you our very best. It's an important first step that will open up an exciting world of discovery and opportunity. Relax, enjoy, and show what you know!

Score Reporting

A few weeks after the test, you will receive an official score report from the testing agency in the mail. Your scores will be reported in comparison to the older students who also took the test.

A few weeks after the report arrives from the test agency, your family will receive an email from NUMATS notifying you that your scores have been posted in your MyCTD Toolbox account. The scores and related resources provided in your Toolbox will help you better understand your academic strengths and needs. There will be recommendations for enrichment activities and specialized courses to help you plan for the future. And, you will get to see how your scores compare to other students who participated in NUMATS.

Whatever your score, the information will be helpful to you, your family, and teachers as you all work together to develop your talents.



NUMATS gave me a better understanding of myself as a learner and introduced me to lots of new opportunities.

NUMATS STUDENT

Engage with other Center for Talent Development Students

CTD Backpack™ is an online community for students. Members are able to communicate with a worldwide network of peers, engage in fun activities and competitions, chat with experts in exciting fields like engineering, chemistry, or creative writing, and earn badges through informal learning activities.

Visit ctd.northwestern.edu/program/ctd-backpack to log in.

Explore Enrichment and Accelerated Programs

CTD and other similar organizations offer high-ability students like you a wide range of online, weekend, and summer opportunities. CTD has developed an Educational Program Guide where you can explore some of these opportunities. You can access the EPG at ctd.northwestern.edu/resources/educational-program-guide.



Just for Parents

Welcome, parents! We know you play a critical role in the NUMATS process. You most likely helped your son or daughter decide to participate in this program and choose a test. You'll see your child through the test day process, help them make sense of scores, and plan next steps. Please know that we're here to help you in any way we can. With that in mind, we want to make certain you have all the facts and figures needed to benefit from NUMATS participation.



The next couple of pages are directed to you, so that you can help your child make the most of their NUMATS experience and stay on the path to reaching their full potential. Read on to learn about the score reporting process and timeline, the resources available to you and your child, recommendations for next steps, and an online community for parents of high-ability students moderated by CTD staff.

Test-Score Reporting and Materials

NUMATS Materials

Several weeks after testing, NUMATS will receive your child's scores from the testing agency and post them to your secured, online MyCTD Toolbox account. We'll also send you an e-mail notification that you now have access to test scores and all follow-up interpretive materials. These materials will help you understand your child's scores, develop a long-range academic plan, and begin to explore careers.

Note that the school's NUMATS coordinator will also be able to access your child's scores and follow-up information in their own online MyCTD Toolbox account if the school's name or NUMATS ID number was provided at registration.

Testing Agency Score Reports

You will receive an official score report from the testing agency in the mail. Your child's scores will be reported along with information comparing his or her performance with that of students in grade 8 (PSAT 8/9™) or high school seniors (SAT® or ACT®).

PSAT 8/9™: Scores are purged by the testing agency at the end of the school year.

SAT®: For NUMATS students in grades 6 through 8, scores are purged by the testing agency unless a request to preserve them is received by College Board by July 31 of the testing year. Send your request to keep scores, including your full identification information, registration number, and test date to: The College Board SAT Program, Attention: Talent Search Scores, P.O. Box 025505, Miami, FL 33102. If scores are preserved by students testing before grade 9, they are available for future use, but only if the student instructs College Board to do so. Students in grade 9 are covered by normal SAT® score reporting policies available at sat.collegeboard.org/scores.

ACT®: Scores are retained by the testing agency indefinitely. They are available for future use, but only if and when the student instructs ACT® to do so.

The average ACT Composite score for high school students is 21.0. The average ACT Composite score for NUMATS students is

22.0

The average SAT Total score for high school students is 1060. The average SAT Total score for NUMATS students is

1076.



Recommendations

Know the purpose of above-grade-level testing through NUMATS.

NUMATS testing provides a much more detailed picture of your child's individual abilities and academic growth. This will help you understand what is needed to ensure that they are engaged, challenged, and realizing full potential. It also will help you decide on schools, programs, and coursework that will benefit them the most. Remember PSAT 8/9™, SAT®, or ACT® do not and cannot measure your child's worth as an individual nor their promise of success in life. Make certain you assure your son or daughter that you will be proud no matter how they score on the test.

Consider new educational activities and resources.

Center for Talent Development's Educational Program Guide (EPG) is available online at ctd.northwestern.edu/resources/educational-program-guide. This guide lists many school-year and summer academic programs in the Midwest and beyond for which your child may be eligible. Talk with school personnel about your child's academic interests and abilities. Talk with your son or daughter about programs of interest that are not available within the regular school setting. Then make a conscious decision to provide at least one new learning experience for your child after testing through NUMATS.

Provide a balanced approach.

We recommend that parents try to maintain balance as they act to support the needs of their gifted children. As a parent you will want to provide the encouragement and love needed to promote confidence, self-esteem, and the best interests of your child. However excessive admiration and affection can be just as detrimental as tying your love to your child's achievements and test scores. As a parent you also will want your child to benefit from the many opportunities available to them. On one hand, pushing a child to participate in special academic coursework, if the child is not interested or is already participating in a number of extra experiences, is not recommended. On the other hand, enabling a child to underperform for fear of being overly aggressive is not productive.



Annual NUMATS testing has helped me to be an advocate and not just say, "Hey, I think my kid's great and should be moving up," but instead, "Here's a test result that shows how well she's doing."

NUMATS PARENT

Model the attributes of a lifelong learner.

We recommend that parents model a love of learning, not worship of straight A's. It's true that grades affect placement and future opportunities, and parents and students are right to be concerned about them. However it's important not to let the pursuit of straight A's become an end in itself and to overshadow the intrinsic value of the material learned. Love of learning, acquiring and fulfilling a desire to be really good at something, a personal philosophy of life, and wisdom are treasures that gifted students are in a position to enjoy throughout their lives.

Plan middle and high school coursework carefully.

The courses your child chooses in grades 6 through 9 are vitally important. They can open up or shut out opportunities for the future. Many courses available in high school may require prerequisite sequences that begin in middle school. For example, taking Advanced Placement calculus in high school generally requires that algebra be taken as part of a middle school mathematics sequence. Additionally, knowledge, skills, and understanding gained in middle school classes can provide a stronger conceptual foundation for advanced work in high school. For example, taking a world language such as Latin in middle school can enhance performance in high school English courses. So talk with your child and their school counselor to plan an inspired course of study. Individualized interpretive materials available on the MyCTD Toolbox will be particularly helpful in making informed choices.



NUMATS Resources

MyCTD Toolbox

Be sure to visit your MyCTD Toolbox to access all NUMATS related materials from test preparation materials to statistical summaries and interpretive materials. Access the Toolbox at my.ctd.northwestern.edu.

CTD Backpack™: A Vibrant Community for Students and Parents

CTD Backpack™ is a worldwide online community for gifted students and their families. Members of CTD Backpack™ for parents are able to engage with peers and experts in the field of gifted education, access weekly content tailored to the needs of parents of gifted students, and learn about latest opportunities provided by CTD.

Members of CTD Backpack™ for students get to collaborate with a worldwide network of students, explore online learning pathways, and earn digital badges through informal learning activities. Students can also access weekly discussions and resources on STEAM topics. As participants in NUMATS, your entire family receives access to CTD Backpack™ for both parents and students. Visit ctd.northwestern.edu/program/ctd-backpack to log in.



1982

The year CTD opened and offered its first academic Talent Search program.

Northwestern | Center for Talent Development
School of Education and Social Policy

**Center for Talent Development
at Northwestern University**

NUMATS

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