

Chesterfield Township School District

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March 4, 2020

Dear Kindergarten Parents and Guardians,

At Chesterfield school, as part of our efforts to maximize each student's learning potential, we occasionally administer grade-wide standardized assessments to help focus our teaching efforts. In line with the NJ Department of Education guidelines, we begin this process in Kindergarten to help identify our students' specific strengths, as well as areas which may benefit from differentiated teaching. We are writing at this time to inform you that on March 10th and 11th we will be administering the *Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT 7) Screening Form* to all Kindergarten children.

Note that the *CogAT* is not a New Jersey state test, but a nationally-normed assessment that measures general reasoning and problem solving skills. This assessment is administered in many schools throughout the country to help assess how well a student uses these skills to solve verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal reasoning problems. These abilities develop gradually throughout a person's lifetime and at different rates for different individuals.

Educators use *CogAT* results to help students learn more effectively. For example, if a child's score profile shows significant strengths, we can provide opportunities for the child to build on these strengths. Similarly, if relatively lower scores are revealed, we can collaborate to provide support as appropriate. Our school district will also later use the *CogAT* results as one of several factors used to help identify potentially gifted students. We certainly recognize that young children's skills may change as they mature, and follow-up assessments may be administered in later years to update this information.

Please know, *and we emphasize*, that there is no specific type of "studying" or preparation for the *CogAT*. As usual, plenty of sleep and a good breakfast are the most effective recommendations. Also, as you are well aware, children are sensitive to the adults important to them. Therefore, we suggest care in avoiding any undue emphasis on "test performance." Indeed, the children may find this an interesting experience and it will help prepare them for future structured tests.

We will be using the *CogAT 7 Screening Form*, which is a shortened, kindergarten- friendly version of the *CogAT* evaluation. Administration will be in short sessions of about 15 minutes each, for a total of approximately 45 minutes. The Kindergarten *CogAT* is untimed, and the teacher reads the questions aloud to the students as they follow along with visual material, and respond using a multiple choice format. In addition to the teacher, additional adult proctors will be available to assist. Students with disabilities may be provided with accommodations as per their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

We encourage all students to be present and on time during the testing days unless they are ill. If you believe an extraordinary circumstance occurred during the testing period that may negatively affect the validity of the test results (such as a death in the family or significant illness), please let us know before the test. Make-up tests will take place as necessary. The test forms are then sent to the test publisher for scoring and we will provide results to parents as we receive them.

If you have any questions regarding this evaluation, please contact your child's teacher or my office.

Sincerely,

Jeanine May-Sivieri
Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction