

Gr 2 ALP assessment FAQ

Timelines

This is our first time going through this process - can you give a timeline for what's to be expected going forward?

Grade 2 Enrichment testing is in late fall with parent input and referrals in late November, testing happening in late November/early December.
Pull-out enrichment begins in early January.

When is the test every year?

Students are assessed for possible placement in the ALP Program classes every spring.
Parent referrals open at the beginning of March. Tests before April break.

Parent Referral Form

How do I access the parent referral form?

The Parent Referral Form can be found on the [ALP page of the district website](#) and is linked in all of the principal newsletter notices.

Is there basic guidance on how best to fill out the referral form?

Provide information about what you notice at home that teachers do not have the opportunity to see at school.

Can referrals be parent-initiated?

Yes, parent referrals are welcome every spring. It does not matter at which tier a student is referred; all students are considered equally for placement in the Advanced Learning Program.

If my child was recommended for testing, am I required to complete the parent referral form?

Parents do not need to fill out the form for any tests a child is already recommended for. The information parents can provide about what they notice at home that teachers do not have the opportunity to see at school is helpful to the committee. If parents want to provide that information, please complete the form.

How do we know if our child is referred for additional testing due to their performance so far?

You will receive an email from Bonnie in late October. Check your spam folder; since it was sent from a mail merge, sometimes the system thinks it is spam. It does not matter at which tier a student is referred; all students are considered equally for placement in the Advanced Learning Program. If you would like your child to take the adaptive above-grade level assessments for Reading and/or Math, please complete the Parent Referral Form by the date listed in the principal newsletters.

If we received the email from Bonnie, does this mean the student is placed in ALP?

The student is not placed. No students are placed at this time. The email was an indication that we would like the student to take the NWEA assessment(s).

Assessments

Which tests do students take in the Spring? Do they retake the CogAT?

Students will take the NWEA Reading, Math, and/or Science assessments. Unlike the NWEA, where we would expect growth to be seen throughout the school year, the development of reasoning abilities happens more slowly, so the COGAT is not taken again in elementary school. Exceptions happen on a case-by-case basis.

Which assessments are used for the ALP placement?

Greenwich uses three types of assessments to paint a precise picture of who the student is:

The aptitude assessment we use is the Cognitive Abilities Test, also called the CogAT. This is given to all second graders in the fall.

Qualitative performance assessments embedded in the general education curriculum require students to perform a task or generate their own responses.

and last of all, the NWEA MAP achievement assessment. This adaptive digital assessment measures a student's mastery of content at and above grade level. It is the only assessment given to students referred for possible placement into ALP classes.

What test scores are used in the spring for Science placement?

For Science, the z-scores for the CogAT Verbal-Quantitative Composite and NWEA Science are averaged.

NWEA

The NWEA is a computerized test, correct? Is this the first time our children would be exposed to this kind of testing? How can we prepare them for this?

There is no special preparation for the assessments. Students use iPads routinely throughout school and can adapt well to the NWEA. The computer displays one question at a time on the screen. Students select an answer using the mouse or the keyboard. The difficulty of the test will adjust based on how the student performs on the questions. MAP will build a test that is specific to each student. Students are not expected to know the answer to every question. It will adapt until they get 50% wrong. The tests are not timed, but students need to work productively. You can look at question types with your child if you want. Students need to know that the MAP test builds a unique test for each student.

Ensure your child is well rested on school days, especially the day of a test. Tired children are less able to pay attention in class or handle the demands of a test.

Give your child a well-rounded diet. A healthy body leads to a healthy, active mind.

Is there a way to see the types of questions students may see on the NWEA?

Sample test questions are available online at <https://practice.mapnwea.org>.

The username and password is “grow”.



Once on the site, you can select the sample items for the subject you would like to see. It is important to note that these are sample item types – you are not taking an adaptive MAP test, and questions do not indicate the difficulty of the items the students may see.

Which practice test should I select?

	NWEA Math	NWEA Reading
Grade	Any Grade 2, 3, 4	Any Grade 2, 3, 4
Course	Math K-12	Reading
Test Language	English	English
Test	Practice Items: Math	Practice Items: Reading

What is the difference between MAP K-2 and 2-5?

The NWEA® MAP Growth K–2 and MAP Growth 2–5 tests were specifically designed to measure different aspects of student achievement in developmentally appropriate ways. MAP Growth K–2 was designed for students not yet ready to read independently and provides audio support to test takers. Conversely, MAP Growth 2–5 was designed for

independent readers. Second graders take the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth test for grades 2-5.

How many questions are on the map test?

There are approximately 40 to 43 questions on each assessment.

Can we see what kind of questions our child fared poorly on for the NWEA or what she needs to focus on so that we can do better on the retest?

The actual test questions are not available but Bonnie can meet with you and look at how your child answered questions on the NWEA within each domain. Make the request using the Inquiry Form found in the score report email and on the ALP website.

How can I help my child prepare for the NWEA tests?

NWEA gives the following tips for families:

MAP® Growth™ is an interim assessment given to K–12 students that provides data to help teachers teach, students learn, and administrators lead. As testing day nears, teachers help their students prepare for what to expect. Families can also play a role, here's how:

Before testing day

- Talk with your child's teacher as often as needed to discuss their progress. Ask about activities you and your child can do at home to help your child's understanding of schoolwork. Families and teachers working together benefits students.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home without distractions from TV or other electronic devices.
- Make sure that your child is well rested on school days and especially the day of a test. Children who are tired are less able to pay attention in class or handle the demands of a test.
- Give your child a well-rounded diet. A healthy body leads to a healthy, active mind.

For the reading portion of the test

- Provide many opportunities for your child to read a wide variety of books, magazines, and other materials. By reading new materials, a child learns new words that might appear on a test. Read aloud to your child, too, even when your

child can read independently. Research shows that this is the most important activity families can do to increase a child's chance of reading success.

- Make time for frequent visits to the library, and let your child explore books that interest them.
- Ask your child's school about a suggested outside reading list or get suggestions from your public library.
- Play games like Scrabble, Spill and Spell, Scattergories, and Balderdash together.
- Work crossword and word search puzzles with your child.

For the math portion of the test

- Spend time with kids on simple board games, puzzles, and activities that encourage using math skills. Even everyday activities such as playing with toys in a sandbox or in a tub at bath time can teach children math concepts such as weight, density, and volume.
- Encourage children to solve problems. Provide assistance, but let them figure it out themselves. Problem solving is a lifetime skill.
- Head to the kitchen! It is filled with tasty opportunities to teach fractional measurements, such as doubling and dividing cookie recipes.
- Point out ways that people use math every day to pay bills, make change, and tip at restaurants. Involve older children in projects that incorporate geometric and algebraic concepts such as planting a garden, building a bookshelf, or figuring out how long it will take to drive to your family vacation destination.
- Read the paper together. Children can learn to read and interpret charts and graphs found in daily newspapers. Collecting and analyzing data will help your child draw conclusions and become a discriminating reader of numerical information.

Performance Tasks

What is an example of the performance test you mentioned previously, that is taken along with the CoGAT and NWEA tests?

Embedded into the general education curriculum are opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know in an open-ended format. In Reading, students are routinely asked inferential questions. These questions capture a student's ability to offer insightful analysis and interpretations of a text beyond the literal level.

In Math, extension questions are included in all unit assessments. These questions are not mandatory and do not factor into the overall score of the Big Ideas chapter assessment. Still, they offer the opportunity for all students to show their deeper understanding of the content.

CogAT

Is the COGAT the same as an IQ test?

The CogAT is a group-administered cognitive abilities test that assesses verbal, quantitative, and non-verbal abilities. The CogAT is NOT an IQ test; it focuses on reasoning skills related to school success. Intelligence tests differ from CogAT in two critical ways: 1) intelligence tests sample a broad range of abilities in addition to the reasoning abilities that CogAT measures, and 2) intelligence tests are normed on the entire population, whereas CogAT is normed on that subset of students who attend school and can take a group-administered test.

When is the CogAT given?

Greenwich is given to all Grade 2 students in October. Scores are emailed to all grade 2 parents in November and are stored in the LinkIt! Portal for future reference.

Before the pandemic, 2nd grade students took all 3 batteries (verbal, quantitative and nonverbal) of the CogAT and parents received a complete paper copy of the report with student age scores, percentiles, and ability report. This year 2nd grade students only took CogAT with 2 batteries and parents no longer receive a paper report. Can parents still get access to some sort of paper report to their children's CogAT scores?

The decision to eliminate the non-verbal battery of the Cognitive Abilities Assessment was a district-level decision to reduce the number of hours students are tested. The ability profile is only available if a student takes all three batteries. You can request one from Bonnie if you need an official paper report.

Scoring

How is the z-score calculated for the student's ALP placement consideration?

Z-scores measure the distance of any data point from the mean in units of standard deviations.

The z-score is the raw score minus the mean divided by the standard deviation.

The z-score value tells you how many standard deviations a score is away from the mean. If a z-score is equal to 0, it is on the mean. The z-score is positive if the value lies above the mean and negative if it lies below the mean. Therefore, we can compare the relative positions of CogAT and NWEA scores within their own distribution to determine which scores are closer to or farther from the mean.

How are the CoGat and NWEA test results combined? Are they equally weighted?

For Reading, the z-scores for the Cogat Verbal and NWEA Reading are averaged, and for Math, the z-scores for the Cogat Quantitative and NWEA Math are averaged.

Are the report card grades considered in terms of ALP admission or is it only the cogat/nwea assessment results?

Report card grades are not considered, per se; however, teacher feedback from embedded performance tasks and assessments is essential to the discussions at the building advisory committee meetings.

How will I know my child's z-scores?

Z-scores are not included in the email sent to parents but are available upon request.

What are the mean and standard deviations so I can calculate my child's z-scores?

Assessment	GPS Average Score	GPS Standard Deviation
CogAT Verbal Battery Standard Age Score	113	12
CogAT Quantitative Battery Standard Age Score	118	14
Grade 2 November NWEA Reading RIT	192	16
Grade 2 November NWEA Math RIT	192	13

Does the district take into account that kids' ages might vary a bit even though they are in the same grade?

The Standard Age Score from the CogAT is age-normed. Age norms compare how a student performs relative to other children of the same age.

What is the Cut-Off Score for placement into ALP?

Data analysis of the ranges of scores was completed using z-score calculations for each of the assessments. To maintain confidentiality we do not report out school specific mean scores. Greenwich does not use a single cut-off score for placement, instead uses multiple pathways for placement into ALP. If a student's average z-score for the nationally norm referenced assessments is within the top 10% of students within the grade level within the building he or she is recommended for placement. Generally speaking, students who are placed if their average score is one standard deviation above the district mean. During the Building advisory meeting the team uses the additional information provided on the parent referral and input form, teacher feedback from embedded performance tasks and assessments, as well as additional considerations that make placement and performance more complex for twice exceptional students to make a recommendation for placement.

Program Questions

Once a student is placed in an ALP class do they need to be tested again for placement for the next year?

As students progress throughout the program, they continue as long as they are successful. If they are struggling, the teacher and parent may choose to have them join the general education class. If a student doesn't qualify at this point in time, students can be looked at again each spring.

Can students be in ALP for just one subject or do they need to be in for all subjects?

Students can be in ALP enrichment for math, reading, or both.

Explain how the 2nd grade enrichment program works vs. the 3rd grade replacement program? Do the children get pulled out of the classroom in both grades?

The Grade 2 program uses an enrichment model in reading and math. A student's homeroom teacher remains their primary reading and/or math teacher. Students placed in reading and/or math are pulled out of their homerooms for additional curricula experiences or activities on grade level in reading and/or Math. The schedule for when students are pulled out for the additional activities is building-specific and may or may not happen during their reading or math classes.

The Grades 3, 4, and 5 program uses a replacement model in reading, math, and science. The ALP teacher becomes the student's primary reading, math, and/or science teacher.

How often do students qualify for ALP in the later grades, 4th or 5th vs. 2nd or 3rd?

Every child's growth is dynamic; additional students are recommended for ALP classes every spring.

If a child is placed in ALP math later (e.g. 4th/5th), how do they bridge the half year knowledge gap that accumulates due to the accelerated pace of ALP vs homeroom? It could be 1.5 years of material they need to catch up on.

The most significant jump would be a one-year jump from 4th to 5th. The ALP teacher works closely with the student to bridge any missing skills. The information from the NWEA helps to inform instruction.

How many children qualify for the program each year? Are there limits for each school?

We look at the top 10% of each school and grade level as a starting point. There are no maximums.

Is there additional homework in ALP classes?

No, ALP classes follow grade-level homework guidelines.

Besides focusing on the core subjects, math, reading, science, does the ALP program include creative thinking instruction such as brain teasers, matrix logic puzzles, projects/presentations, or additional field trips?

Creative thinking instruction, such as brain teasers, matrix logic puzzles, and projects/presentations, are embedded into the curriculum. ALP students do not participate in additional field trips.

The program obviously sounds great, but what are the cons? Does our child miss out on other subjects in the homeroom?

The enrichment model has instructional time lost. Replacement model - pacing and complexity are heightened, causing anxiety in some students.

Teacher Student Ratios

What does the ALP teacher staffing look like across each elementary school? Does each school have one dedicated ALP math and one dedicated ALP reading teacher?

Each building has 2 full-time ALP teachers. In most buildings, one teacher teaches Reading, and one teacher teaches Math and Science.

Will there be an ALP open house to meet the building teachers?

The ALP Reading and/or Math Teacher will contact the parents of students placed in the program the week of February 5.

What is the ratio of teacher:student?

We use the same teacher-student guidelines as classroom teachers. Class sizes range throughout the district from school to school.