South Carolina Performance Task Assessment User's Guide:

An Explanation of the Performance Tasks and Gifted and Talented Qualification

South Carolina Performance Tasks
User's Guide

Introduction

The state of South Carolina and the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary developed the South Carolina Performance Tasks Assessment. The assessments are used to identify intellectually advanced elementary students for inclusion in gifted education programs. Thirty-one districts across the state of South Carolina participated in the test development process at either the pilot or field test phase, with three of these districts participating in both phases. An important consideration in the test development process was to limit bias related to gender, minority group membership, and socio-economic status. Therefore, at every stage of the process the impact of gender, ethnicity, and free/reduced-lunch status was investigated and reported.

There are several features that distinguish performance-based assessment from traditional standardized aptitude and achievement measures. As with traditional measures, all forms rely on pencil and paper to record responses to the items. However, unlike most traditional measures, the Performance Tasks Assessment provides students with sets of manipulatives to assist them with the problem-solving process for many of the items on the test.

Another feature, which distinguishes this Performance Tasks Assessment from traditional measures, is that it tends to focus on deep reasoning and problem solving within a domain. Rather than relying on many items to sample knowledge and application across a domain or field, the performance-based assessment selects fewer but typical items that probe a student's ability to combine complex task demands. The element of speed is minimized in the test-taking procedure. Although there are limits on the time given to students to complete items, these limits have been found to be sufficient to allow students to respond appropriately.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the Performance Tasks Assessment is the provision for *preteaching*. ***Preteaching is defined as providing instructions for the task demands so that students understand what they are expected to do***. The purpose of the preteaching is to familiarize inexperienced students with the task demands of the items and to clarify performance expectations before the actual testing occurs. While the preteaching cannot be expected to lead to task mastery for all students, it assists students who have not previously been exposed to the particular performance requirements for each task.

The Purpose of the Performance Tasks Assessment
The South Carolina Performance Tasks Assessment is intended to identify students on Dimension C of the South Carolina gifted regulations [R43-220 Gifted and Talented, amended July 1, 2013]. Students who meet the criteria for Dimension A (aptitude) or Dimension B (achievement), but not both, **must** take the primary level in grade 2 and/or 3 and the intermediate level in grade 4 and/or 5. These assessments are designed to measure a student's capacity to solve open-ended problems and then to explain solutions, both verbally and nonverbally. Each level of the instrument has four forms (A, B, C, D), which contain similar test items structured to have comparable levels of difficulty. Each level and form of the test has a verbal and a nonverbal domain.

At the primary level, both the verbal and nonverbal domains have five items. Each item is derived from a test item-type. The item-types for the primary verbal assessment are verbal problem solving, writing, analogies, verbal relationships, and vocabulary. The primary nonverbal item-types include arithmetic problem solving, logic, spatial problem solving, spatial manipulation, and spatial transformation.

At the intermediate level, the verbal domain has five items and the nonverbal domain has seven items. Again, each item is derived from a test item-type. The intermediate verbal assessment item-types include verbal problem solving, writing, analogies, verbal reasoning, and vocabulary. The intermediate nonverbal item-types include number concepts, patterns, number theory, spatial manipulation, spatial problem solving, geometry, and spatial visualization.

Summary

Students Tested:
- Students in grades 2-5 (for placement in grades 3-6) must qualify to take the Performance Tasks Assessment. Students must qualify with Dimension A or B, but not both (see next page)

Subjects Tested:
- There is a verbal test and a non-verbal test.
- There are two levels of the test, Primary for grades 2 and 3 and Intermediate for grades 4 and 5.

Types of Test Items:
- Manipulatives are used to provide a "hands-on" dimension to the problem- solving process. The test also focuses on deep reasoning and problem solving within a domain (verbal or non-verbal), using fewer, but typical items that probe a student's ability to combine complex task demands.
- Pre-teaching is used to familiarize inexperienced students with the task demands of the items and to clarify performance expectations before the actual testing occurs.
- Verbal item types: verbal problem solving, writing, analogies, verbal relationships, and vocabulary (Primary), verbal problem solving, writing, analogies, verbal reasoning, and vocabulary (Intermediate).
- Non-verbal item types: arithmetic problem solving, logic, spatial problem solving, spatial manipulation, and spatial transformation (Primary) and number concepts, patterns, number theory, spatial manipulation, spatial problem solving, geometry, and spatial visualization (Intermediate)

When Are Tests Administered
- The South Carolina Performance Tasks Assessment is administered from mid-February to early March

How Results Are Reported:
- Districts download results by district and school from the c2 website.
- Individual student score reports are mailed to districts in late May.

How Are Results Used:
- Results from the PTA are used for Dimension C criteria (see next page)

Criteria Used in the Identification Process

Dimension A Reasoning Abilities	**Nationally normed individual or group aptitude test:** • a score at the 93rd national age percentile or higher on verbal/linguistic, quantitative/mathematical, nonverbal, and/or a **composite** of the three **Students may be eligible for placement on the basis of their _aptitude scores alone_:** • a composite score at the 96th national age percentile or higher (S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-220.2 (B)(5)(c) for students entering grades three through twelve (Scores are good for 2 years after the year in which the test was administered.)
Dimension B Achievement	**Nationally normed achievement test:** • a score at the 94th national percentile or higher on approved subtests (reading comprehension and/or mathematical concepts and problem solving) If the approved subtests are unavailable, use the _total reading_ and/or _total mathematics_ score.
	South Carolina achievement test: • advanced-level score (top 10% of scores) on the reading portion English language arts test and/or mathematics test
	NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP): • Composite score on the Reading Achievement (total RIT in reading) and/or the composite score on the Mathematics Achievement (total RIT in math) must be used when determining national grade percentile ranking for Dimension B (Scores are good for 2 years after year in which the test is administered, unless the same test is administered again. In this case, the newest score overrides other scores for the same test.)
Dimension C Academic Performance	**Performance Tasks, for students entering grades three through six:** • primary verbal or nonverbal: 16 or higher for students entering grade three; 18 or higher for students entering grade four • intermediate verbal: 16 or higher or students entering grade 5; 18 or higher or students entering grade 6 • intermediate nonverbal: 22 or higher for students entering grade 5; 25 or higher for students entering grade 6
	Grade point average (GPA) in the academic disciplines for students entering grades six through twelve: * 3.75 GPA or higher on a 4.0 scale

Students who meet the eligibility criteria in two of the three dimensions are eligible for gifted and talented services. No single criterion can eliminate a student from consideration.

South Carolina Performance Tasks Assessment
For the Identification of Gifted and Talented Students

Sample Score Report

District: Lexington 6

School Number: 32-06-019

School Name: Lincoln Street

Student Last Name: Doe

Student First Name: John

Grade: 2

Performance Tasks Assessment Scores: Primary Level

    Verbal Score: 12   Not Tested Verbal:

    Nonverbal Score: 16   Not Tested Nonverbal:

    Test Results: Qualifies

> This portion indicates the score the student made on the verbal and nonverbal test. It also can show if the student did not take one of the tests. If the student did not take the verbal test, for example, the report will show "Not Tested Verbal." If the student took the Verbal test, the Verbal Score will be listed. Numbers 1-4 (see below) tells why the student did not take the test.

Explanation of Student Scores on the Performance Tasks Assessment (PTA)

- Students can qualify on verbal test results, nonverbal test results, or verbal and nonverbal test results.
- Primary qualifying scores:
  Grade 2 – Verbal and/or Nonverbal score of 16 or better out of a possible 20
  Grade 3 – Verbal and/or Nonverbal score of 18 or better out of a possible 20
- Intermediate qualifying scores:
  Grade 4 – Verbal score of 16 or better out of a possible 20
            Nonverbal score of 22 or better out of possible 28
  Grade 5 – Verbal score of 18 or better out of a possible 20
            Nonverbal score of 25 or better out of a possible 28
- Not Tested Reasons:
  1 – Moved
  2 – Already GT
  3 – Refused
  4 – Other

> The Explanation of Student Scores gives information about the range of possible scores and qualifying scores by level and domain. It also explains the meaning of numbers 1-4 if student did not take the test(s).