GATE Identification

Students in our District are identified for the GATE Program through a screening test automatically given to all 2nd graders (unless parents opt out). Each school decides when to hold the test for their students so it may be in the fall or the spring. The test is done in a group setting, takes about 30-45 mins to complete, and is taken on a computer or tablet.
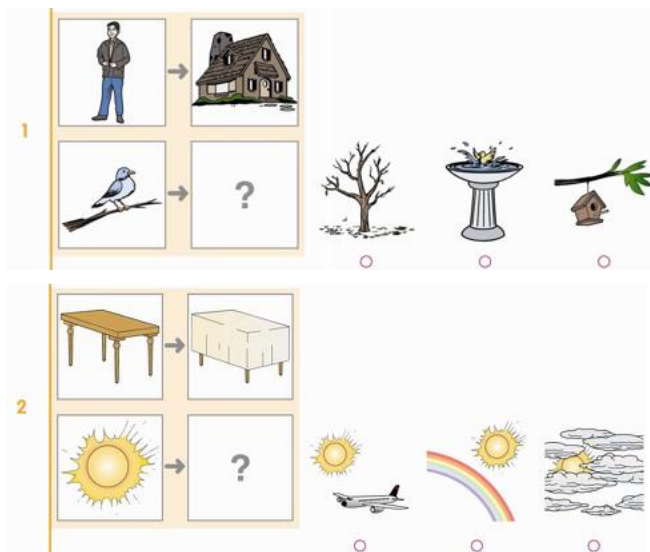
The District uses the short, screening version of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT Level 8, which is for 2nd grade) and not the full battery (long version). The District no longer uses the Raven Progressive Matrices test for GATE identification (a test that measured abstract reasoning).

According to the test authors: "The CogAT test measures general and specific reasoning abilities in three domains: VERBAL, QUANTITATIVE, and NONVERBAL. These abilities reflect the overall efficiency of cognitive processes and strategies that enable individuals to learn new tasks and solve problems. Because these abilities are closely related to an individual's success in school in virtually all subjects, CogAT results are helpful in planning effective instructional programs and adapting instruction to enhance the student's chances of success in learning."

The CogAT Screening test is based on ANALOGIES, which compare two things that are mostly different from each other but have some traits in common. For example, in the sample verbal/picture question below, a person lives in a house, so the correct analogy is that the bird lives in a birdhouse (or - the table is covered by a cloth over it; similarly, the sun is covered by clouds over it).
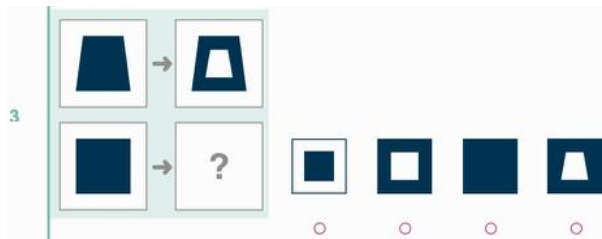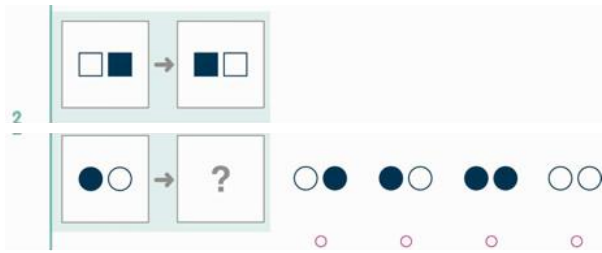
The Screening test has 3 parts: 1) VERBAL: Verbal/Picture Analogies, 2) QUANTITATIVE: Number Analogies, and 3) NON-VERBAL: Figure Matrices. It is very important to know that for 2nd graders, the entire test is actually non-verbal (even for the VERBAL part of the test) because it relies on pictures to ask the questions, rather than using written or spoken language. This prevents English language learners from being disadvantaged in the test. In addition, because it measures reasoning abilities instead of testing the student's knowledge, it is considered to be fair to all students.

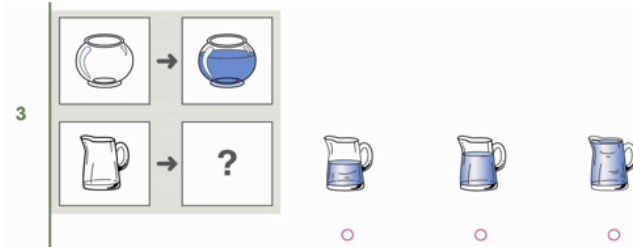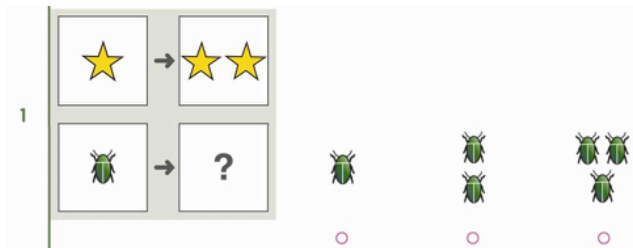Example of VERBAL: Verbal/Picture Analogies questions (below)

Example of NON-VERBAL: Figure Matrices questions (below)

Examples of QUANTITATIVE: Number Analogies questions (below)

The District uses a computer algorithm to access the student record and pull the results of the CogAT plus the math and English Language Arts portions of your child's Standards Based Report Card (SBRC) into a scoring matrix that also takes into account any other special factors (such as having an IEP/504, being an English Language Learner, being qualified for free/reduced lunch, or having 3 or more school moves due to military relocation). If the total matrix score is 135 (or more) points the student is recommended for the Seminar Program. A score of 121 (or more) points means recommendation for GATE Cluster.

Families receive a letter from their home school with the results before the end of the school year. For new Seminar identified students, if the home school does not offer any Seminar classes, you may use the "Seminar Intent to Enroll" process (before the summer recess begins) in order to request to switch in the fall to the closest neighborhood school that does.