

CogAT® Case Study: A playbook for advancing equity and inclusion in gifted programs



Executive Summary

Richardson Independent School District — the second most diverse district in all of Texas — needed a tool for universal screening and to measure each student's reasoning ability and potential for learning. Since selecting the Cognitive Abilities Test™ (CogAT) nine years ago, Richardson ISD has not only transformed its identification process to be more equitable and inclusive through the use of universal screening and local norms, it has also increased the number of 2nd-grade students identified by nearly tenfold at one Title I campus.

Richardson Independent School District Quick Facts



Among the 150 largest districts in the nation

21% Black students



Second most diverse district in Texas, out of 1,000 school districts

29% White students



~40,000 students across 56 campuses



55% of students across the district are on free and reduced lunch

37%

Hispanic students



32% English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL)

Challenges

With nearly 40,000 students in the district spanning 56 campuses, no two schools are the same and one size does not fit all for Richardson ISD. Using both an achievement battery and a figural reasoning test proved time-consuming and ultimately inadequate when it came to evaluating the ability and potential for learning of students across a diverse district where many students are under-resourced.

Based on an analysis of the district's demographics, the group identified for gifted and talented programming was noticeably imbalanced proportionate to the student population. Richardson ISD needed a better solution that would help them equitably assess student potential while equipping educators with the tools to best recognize and nurture their students' raw talent.

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Overview of Solutions

Richardson ISD currently utilizes the evidence-based practice of universal screening with CogAT for all students in both 2nd and 6th grades. Utilizing multiple norming pathways for the test results, Richardson ISD was able to dramatically change the proportionate makeup of the identified pool of their gifted and talented students while alleviating concerns about over- and under-identification. Additionally, they found ways to inform instructional design, bolster Gen Ed teacher training, and strengthen programs for under-resourced students by putting CogAT data to use for all students — not just those identified for gifted and talented services.