

# Memorandum

**Date:** March 8, 2019  
**From:** Sarita Subramanian  
**To:** George Sweeting  
**Subject:** Borough President Adams Request on G&T Testing

## **IBO Estimate for Cost of Providing Universal Testing for Gifted and Talented in Grades Pre-kindergarten Through Second**

Using 2017-2018 data, IBO estimated that the cost of providing universal testing for all 312,700 students in grades pre-kindergarten through second would be roughly \$3.8 million annually. We estimated the cost for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten to be about \$1.0 and \$1.2 million each year, respectively. The cost of universal testing for first and second grade students would be roughly \$1.6 million each year for both grades together. The net annual increase in funding for gifted and talented testing support would be \$3.7 million, as \$142,700 was already allocated for this purpose by the Department of Education in 2017-2018.

Currently, the Department of Education provides some funding to elementary schools that identify students in grades kindergarten, first, and second who are “eligible” for gifted and talented testing (see [School Allocation Memorandum Number 99 for FY2018](#)). The Department of Education provides a per diem rate for a substitute teacher—to cover the position vacated by a regular classroom teacher who is needed to administer the assessments—for each allotted coverage day, which is dependent on the number of eligible students identified per grade. Schools are entitled to one allotted coverage day for every 10 kindergarten students being tested, and one allotted coverage day for every 15 students in grades 1 and 2 who are being tested. The number of allotted coverage days is multiplied by the per diem rate for a substitute teacher (\$162.86 in 2017-2018). For the 2017-2018 school year, \$142,700 was allocated to schools to support testing for those 13,000 eligible students in traditional public schools (those located in districts 1-32).

IBO used these same assumptions to calculate the number of allotted days for all students—not just those identified as “eligible”—in each grade kindergarten through second in each school, including charter schools and district 75 schools serving only students with disabilities. In addition, we estimated the cost to test all pre-kindergarten students using the assumptions that exist for kindergarten students (one allotted day for every 10 students). For students attending pre-kindergarten programs outside of public schools—including in standalone pre-K centers operated by the Department of Education and community-based organizations—we assumed that the per diem rate for a substitute teacher for each allotted coverage day would also allow for testing to take place on the premises.

To estimate the number of students who would be tested in each grade, IBO calculated the total number of pre-kindergarten through second grade students at each site (pre-K program, school, etc.)

from the 2017-2018 audited register. For grades kindergarten through second, we subtracted the number of students in each public school that were already enrolled in gifted and talented classes according to the Class Size Report for 2017-2018. We used that final tally by grade to then calculate the number of allotted coverage days, which was then multiplied by the per diem rate for a substitute teacher of \$162.86.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Total Allocation for Testing</b>
Pre-K	70,704	\$1,016,084
Kindergarten	79,640	\$1,224,381
First Grade	81,119	\$805,831
Second Grade	81,258	\$806,157
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>312,721</b>	<b>\$3,852,453</b>

Some additional factors to consider include any additional costs of scoring the tests, potential changes in the contract with NCS Pearson Inc. due to an increase in the number of students tested, and limiting universal test-taking to a one-time occurrence for students in grades pre-kindergarten through second. IBO was unable to identify costs specifically for scoring the test, or to determine whether the scoring was provided under the contract with NCS Pearson Inc. If costs for scoring the tests would increase, or if the contract is associated with a particular number of students tested, then the total cost to offer universal testing would increase. Finally, if universality of testing was limited to once in a student's time in pre-kindergarten through second grade, then total costs would decrease. This could be done by providing universal testing for all pre-kindergarten students (as described above) and testing for first-time students in grades kindergarten through second. In 2017-2018, there were 30,600 first-time students in grades kindergarten through second—who would not have been automatically tested in the public system in the prior year—scattered across more than 1,000 schools. If we assumed the additional cost to test those students was based on one allotted coverage day for every 15 students (relaxing the assumption that students attend the same school), the cost of testing those first-time students would be \$332,200. Adding that to the cost of testing all 70,704 pre-kindergarten students—\$1.0 million as reported above—would yield a total annual cost of \$1.3 million.