

The Biloxi Public School District will provide programming for students who meet the criteria for intellectually gifted services in second through sixth grade. The program is called CREATE – *Creative Reasoning Enrichment and Thinking Experiences*.

MISSION

The CREATE program will recognize and nurture exemplary abilities so that Intellectually Gifted learners are provided an appropriately challenging education. This education will enable the students to realize their fullest potential and to become contributing citizens of the world.

GOALS

To provide experiences which are centered in the development of thought processes with Exercises in the MDE Gifted Program Outcomes: Thinking Skills, Creativity, Group Dynamics, Communication, Research, and Self-Directed Learning. Also included are Social/Emotional Development, Visual and Performing Arts, and Career Awareness.

MDE DEFINITION

The State of Mississippi defines “Intellectually Gifted Children” as follows:

“Intellectually Gifted Children” shall mean those children and youth who are found to have exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process.

“Gifted Education Programs (GEP) shall mean special programs of instruction for intellectually gifted children in grades 2 through 12, programs of instruction for Academically Gifted children within Grades 9 through 12, and programs of instruction for creatively and/or artistically gifted children within Grades 2 through 12 in public elementary and secondary schools of this state. Such programs shall be designed to meet the individual needs of gifted children and shall be in addition to and different from the regular program of instruction provided by the district.”

Although the State of Mississippi recognizes permissive programming for academically gifted students in grades 9-12, artistically gifted children in grades 2-12, and creatively gifted children in grades 9-12, only intellectually gifted programs in grades 2-6 are mandated by law. At this time, the Biloxi Public Schools offers the program for intellectually gifted children in the mandated grades 2-6.

PURPOSE

To identify those students who demonstrate unusually high achievement and/or potential for unusually high achievement. Because of their unusual capabilities, they require uniquely qualitatively differentiated education programs not usually available in the regular classroom. These uniquely different programs are required to enable the gifted students to realize their potential contributions to self and society. Programming is offered through a pull-out resource program. Mississippi regulations require that intellectually gifted students be provided services by a properly endorsed teacher in a resource room for a *recommended* 300 minutes per week, or a *minimum* of 240 minutes per week.

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

The student identification process is separated in to six stages: Stage 1 – Referral; Stage 2 – LSC Review; Stage 3 – Parental Permission for Testing; Stage 4 – Assessment; Stage 5 – Assessment Report; and Stage 6 – Eligibility Determination. Stage 1, 2, and 3 will take place during the instructional days of the school year as defined by the BPS school calendar. Stage 4, 5, and 6 will occur during the subsequent summer.

The identification process consists of a combination of subjective and objective measures to determine eligibility for the gifted program and includes and equitable opportunity for the inclusion of students who are culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) guidelines, physically handicapped, or ADD/ADHD. Throughout the identification process, district personnel are careful to select measures that target the student's strengths.

All data collected as part of the identification process is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Access to this information is restricted to the personnel working directly in the gifted education program, or having a documented need for access. Parents have the right to view their children's records at any time.

STAGE 1: REFERRAL

There are two types of gifted referral processes:

- Type One - Mass Screening Referral Process addresses those students who are mass screened for gifted eligibility.
- Type Two - Individual Referral Process addresses those students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility.

Mass Screening Referral Process

This process requires all Mississippi districts to screen all students in at least one grade level each year. The district uses a normed group measure of intelligence in the Mass Screening Referral Process. This process should assist in identifying students in underrepresented populations. Students who obtain a full-scale score at or above the 90th percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall move forward in the referral process. Students who scored at or above the 84th percentile but lower than the 90th percentile on the normed group measure of intelligence shall be subjected to an Emerging Potential for Gifted Referral Checklist. If these students meet the criteria on the checklist, they shall move forward in the referral process.

The next step in the process consists of the collection of substantiated student data obtained through the use of other objective and subjective measures. A student shall satisfy two of the following *additional* criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. a score at or above the 90th percentile on the General Intellectual Ability section of the *Scales for Identifying Gifted Students*,
2. a score at or above the 90th percentile on the Creativity section of the *Scales for Identifying Gifted Students*,
3. a score at or above the 90th percentile on the Leadership section of the *Scales for Identifying Gifted Students*,
4. a score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test,
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
7. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

Individual Referral Process

This process involves students who are individually referred for gifted eligibility. A student may be referred by a parent, teacher, counselor, administrator, peer, self, or anyone else having reason to believe that the student might be intellectually gifted. The person initiating the referral will sign the referral form and date it. Once the student is referred, the district personnel shall collect the data required to satisfy the referral criteria. Once a referral form has been initiated, signed, and dated, only the LSC or parents can stop the identification process. Students participating in the Individual Referral Process shall satisfy three of the following criteria before moving forward to the LSC Review of Referral Data Stage:

1. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months,

2. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published characteristics of giftedness checklist,
3. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of creativity,
4. a score at or above the superior range on a normed published measure of leadership,
5. a score at or above the 90th percentile on total language, total math, total reading, total science, total social studies, or the composite on a normed achievement test,
6. a score at or above the 90th percentile on a normed measure of cognitive ability,
7. a score at or above the 90th percentile on an existing measure of individual intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months, and/or
8. other measures that are documented in the research on identification of intellectually gifted students.

Documentation of measures will be maintained in a written document approved by the local school board indicating that the district is using the state minimal scale/percentile score criteria on all referral measures. This document shall be distributed to district administrators, school counselors, and teachers and shall be available to parents at each school site.

NOTE: Any student who does not meet the minimum acceptable criteria (score in the 90th percentile) on the normed group measure of intelligence during the Mass Screening Referral Process and does not qualify for the Emerging Potential for Gifted criteria, can be referred by anyone for the Individual Referral for Screening Process. The individually referred student shall not be excluded from the referral process by their performance on the normed group measure of intelligence administered during the Mass Screening Referral Process.

STAGE 2: LSC REVIEW OF REFERRAL DATA

Once the referral data have been collected, the LSC shall review all data and make one of the following recommendations:

1. the student has satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and should move forward to the assessment stage, or
2. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures, however, the LSC feels strongly that additional data should be collected and the student reconsidered at that time, or
3. the student has not satisfied minimal criteria on at least three measures and the identification process should stop.

Provisions for Emerging Potential for Gifted Populations

At this point the LSC will make the decision as to the possibility that the student could be eligible for consideration as a candidate for an emerging potential for gifted assessment. If it is believed that the student might have emerging gifted potential, then the Emerging Potential for Intellectually Gifted Assessment Checklist should be completed for possible use during the assessment process. The Emerging Potential for Gifted category makes provisions for certain factors that exist that may put the student at a disadvantage when inappropriate instruments are used during the assessment process.

STAGE 3: PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR TESTING

At this time, district personnel will obtain written parental permission for testing. District personnel will also notify parents in writing about their rights under FERPA.

STAGE 4: ASSESSMENT

Once the LSC has determined that a student has satisfied minimal referral criteria and in order to move forward to the assessment stage, district personnel will review and compile all data available on the student. This data will also be made available to a licensed examiner.

The assessment stage is the individual test of intelligence, which will be administered by a licensed examiner. In no case will the examiner be related to the student being tested. The examiner will review all available data on the

student, whether or not it satisfies minimal identification criteria, and use that information to select the most appropriate test of intelligence. Standard operating procedures should be followed during the selection and administration of all assessments as reflected in the examiner's manuals. The examiner will provide a signed and dated report of the test administration to include testing conditions, scores on all subtests or subscales, and the strengths and weaknesses of the student. A student must score at or above the 91st percentile composite/full scale in order to satisfy eligibility criteria.

District personnel shall make decisions as to whether the minimal acceptable criteria set in regulations will be used, or if a higher minimal acceptable criteria will be used. The assessment criteria and acceptable minimal scale/percentile scores to be used are documented in writing in the district's Gifted Education Program Proposal submitted to and approved by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at the MDE.

Students referred for the gifted program will be tested a maximum number of two times at the assessment stage at the responsibility of the school district.

Emerging Potential for Gifted

Students who have satisfied criteria on the Emerging Potential for Gifted Checklist who did not satisfy minimal acceptable criteria on a group measure of intelligence, but, did score at least at the 84th percentile or have a scale score that falls within the range of the 90th percentile confidence interval of the state minimum scale/percentile score, may be administered one of the following additional measures to determine eligibility:

1. A test of cognitive abilities with a minimal score at the 90th percentile,
2. A group intelligence measure with a minimal score at the 90th percentile

Identification criteria, as approved by the MDE on the local district's Gifted Education Program Proposal, must be satisfied for a student to be ruled eligible by the LSC for the intellectually gifted education program.

Potentially Twice-Exceptional Students

Students who already have an eligibility ruling under IDEA and are being assessed for an intellectually gifted eligibility, and who did not satisfy all of the required minimal acceptable referral criteria but did meet at least one referral criterion shall have their results reviewed by the LSC and a licensed examiner. If the student scores at or above the 91st percentile on the individual test of intelligence (composite score or approved subtest score) or in the opinion of the reviewing committee, would benefit from participation in the intellectually gifted program, the student may be granted a provisional eligibility for the intellectually gifted program for a period of one year. At the end of that year, the student's teacher of the gifted shall meet with the review committee to discuss the student's performance in the program. If the student has demonstrated success in the program, the LSC shall change the eligibility status from provisional to regular eligibility. If the student has not been successful in the program, the provisional eligibility shall be revoked.

STAGE 5: ASSESSMENT REPORT

District personnel will write an Assessment Report, which must contain the following components:

1. Student's name,
2. Name of at least three measures from Stage 1: Referral that were used to determine the need to administer an individual test of intelligence,
3. Results of each measure,
4. Name of individual who administered or completed each measure and the date administered or completed,
5. Test behaviors for any individually administered test(s),
6. Interpretation of the results of each individually administered test(s),
7. Name of the person who administered the individual test of intelligence and date test was administered,
8. Qualifications of the individual who administered the individual test of intelligence,
9. Results of the individual test of intelligence to include scores on all subtests and, identified strengths and weaknesses,
10. Name of the person responsible for writing the Assessment Report, his/her signature, and position, and
11. Date of the Assessment Report.

STAGE 6: LSC ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Once the Assessment Report is finalized, the LSC will meet to review all data and determine if eligibility criteria have or have not been satisfied. The LSC will rule that the student is or is not eligible for the intellectually gifted program.

Parental Notification

District personnel will notify in writing the parents of each student tested for the intellectually gifted program about the assessment results. District personnel will offer to explain any of the results about which the parents have questions. District personnel will also notify parents in writing about their rights under FERPA.

Parental Permission for Placement

After a student has been ruled eligible for one of the gifted programs, written parental permission for placement shall be obtained before the student is placed in the program.

OUT-OF-STATE ELIGIBILITIES

As each state has a unique set of eligibility criteria for placement in a gifted program, a student moving to Mississippi with a gifted eligibility from another state must satisfy the Mississippi eligibility criteria before being considered for placement in the gifted program. The eligibility ruling from another state may be used to initiate the referral process in Mississippi. There is no temporary placement in the gifted program while the student goes through the eligibility process within the district.

The Biloxi Public School District will, in accordance with the *Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children*, honor the previous gifted ruling and place the student who moves into the district in the gifted program on a probationary basis. The district will initiate the referral process for determination of gifted eligibility in accordance with the Biloxi Public School District Board policy and the Mississippi Department of Education *Regulations for Gifted Education Program 2013*.

HOMEWORK/CLASSWORK

Gifted students in grades 2-6 may not be required to make-up class work missed when they are scheduled to be in the gifted classroom. Gifted students will be held accountable for demonstrating mastery of concepts and information on regularly scheduled tests. It should be noted that some gifted students will not be high academic achievers for a variety of reasons. It is not reasonable to expect intellectually gifted students, artistically gifted students, and/or creatively gifted students, by virtue of having been granted one of those gifted eligibility rulings, to make all A's and B's.

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Students in the CREATE program work under specific Instructional Management Plan (IMP) objectives and time frames. Withholding permission for a student to attend the gifted classes should not be used as a disciplinary measure. *Failure to complete gifted education class assignments can be used as grounds for dismissal from the program.*

ANNUAL REASSESSMENT

A committee will meet at least annually to reassess each gifted student's continuation in the program. The committee must include at least the student's teacher of the gifted and a designated administrative representative. Documentation of the meeting must be maintained and must include the name(s) of the student(s) discussed, a list of the committee members present, and the date of the meeting. Since participation in the gifted program is an entitlement under law, the student should remain in the program as long as he/she is successful in the program. Grades and/or success in the regular classroom is the responsibility of the regular classroom teachers and should not be considered as a reason for removal from the gifted program. Should the committee determine that a student should exit the program due to lack of progress in the program and/or unsatisfactory participation in the program, the student's parents must be notified and given the opportunity to discuss the decision with the committee before the student is removed. Should the parents not agree to the removal of the student from the program, the local district shall grant the parents a hearing.

The district has a process in place as to how this hearing process will be conducted and how the lack of agreement will be resolved.

HEARING PROCESS

Parent(s) who are not in agreement with the school-based committee decision to remove their student from the gifted program will present their concerns in writing to the principal of the school. The principal and parent will attempt to resolve the matter informally. If the parent(s) are not satisfied with the action taken by the principal, the parent(s) shall, within five (5) school days after meeting with the principal, put their concerns in writing and present them to the contact person for gifted programming within the district. The gifted program contact person will schedule a meeting of the District Hearing Team within five (5) school days or a time frame agreed upon by the parent(s). Parent(s) will be extended an invitation to attend the team meeting. The team will render a written decision based on information shared during the meeting.

PARENTAL DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICES

Should a parent choose to discontinue his/her child's participation in the gifted program, the student will no longer be considered eligible for gifted services. Reinstatement in the program will require the student to go through the Referral Process again after a time period of at least one school year.