

# Platte County R-3 School District



**LEAP**

*Logic \* Enrichment \* Academics \* Problem Solving*

**GIFTED EDUCATION  
HANDBOOK**

## ***Platte County School District LEAP Program Staff***

- Dr. Jennifer Beutel, Executive Director of Pupil Services
- Dr. Amy Cordova, Gifted Facilitator - Platte City Middle School, Platte County High School
- Lisa Thomsen, Gifted Facilitator - Barry School, Pathfinder Elementary
- Wendy Rust, Gifted Facilitator - , Siegrist Elementary, Compass Elementary, Platte County High School
- Jill Marriott, Gifted Facilitator - Compass Elementary, Siegrist Elementary

## ***Gifted Program Vision, Mission, Goals***

### **Vision**

Where learners of tomorrow achieve excellence, embrace change, and forge new traditions.

### **Mission**

To establish meaningful learning experiences for gifted students and create a safe and caring environment. The LEAP Program is committed to creating responsible citizens, capable of lifelong accomplishments.

### **Goals**

- Gifted students will achieve at high academic levels.
- Gifted staff will provide a rigorous, technology-enhanced, and differentiated curriculum.
- Gifted staff will address the affective needs of gifted students within the curriculum.

## Bright Child Versus Gifted Learner

There will be differences in the characteristics of or behaviors exhibited by gifted children when compared to high achieving students in the classroom. Gifted and bright children are often confused. Below are some common differences between the bright child and the gifted learner.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRIGHT CHILD AND GIFTED LEARNER	
Bright Child	Gifted Learner
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Play around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Enjoys sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity
Copies accurately	Creates new design
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Technician	Inventor
Is alert	Is keenly observant

## LEAP Identification Procedures

### State of Missouri Requirements

In 1973, the State Board of Education was authorized by the Missouri legislature (H.B. 474) to establish standards for special programs for gifted students. As defined in Section 162.675 RSMo, gifted children are “those who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued education growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade level curriculum.”

### Platte County School District Testing Procedures

#### **Referral**

All students in the Platte County R-3 School District will take FastBridge “aReading” and FastBridge “aMathematics” as a universal academic screener. Universal screening occurs three times a year and allows school personnel to get a snapshot of student learning. FastBridge assessments combine valid and reliable assessments in the form of both Computer Adaptive Tests (CAT) and Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM) to help educators identify students' academic needs ([www.illuminateed.com](http://www.illuminateed.com)). Students who score in the 95th percentile in reading or mathematics on FastBridge may be considered for further screening.

#### **Variations of the Typical Delta Referral Process**

- *Gifted Program Student From Another District:* A student who was in a gifted program in another district is subject to a records review to determine if the student qualifies based upon the Platte County R-3 LEAP criteria. For a student such as this, copies of all test data will need to be given to the LEAP instructor at the designated school. If the student meets the qualifications of the qualification criteria, the parents will be notified in writing. Otherwise, the student will continue through the referral process.
- *Returning Platte County LEAP Student:* Once a student has qualified for the gifted program in the Platte County R-3 School District, the student maintains eligibility status. If a student has withdrawn from the program and the parent desires the student to return, the student does not need to be rescreened. Instead, the parent needs to give written notification of the desire to return to LEAP to the child's school and to the coordinator. A meeting with team members will follow.

Platte County R-3 School District utilizes a three-tiered approach to identify gifted learners.

#### **Tier 1 Evaluation: *Achievement in the 95th percentile or higher in either Reading or Mathematics.***

All students in the Platte County R-3 School District will be administered a universal screener three times per year. Results from the universal screener's fall and winter national window will be utilized. Currently, Platte County R-3 administers the following universal screener:

- FastBridge Reading
- FastBridge Mathematics

A review of existing data is completed on all students who score in the 95th percentile or higher on the Universal Screener. Students who show consistent performance in Mathematics and/or Reading are placed in a talent pool for further evaluation. Parents are notified in writing through a Prior Written Notice. A Permission to Assess document will be included. A signed consent for further assessment must be returned before a student may proceed in the evaluation cycle.

#### **Tier 2 Evaluation: *Academic Ability; Creativity, Reasoning, and Problem-Solving Ability; Other***

- SAGES-3. The SAGES-3 is a norm-referenced test used to identify students who are gifted and/or

talented in general intellectual ability and academic aptitude. The SAGES-3 has two levels: K-3 and 4-8. During the second tier of evaluation, building level gifted facilitators will administer the SAGES-3 to assess academic ability in Reading/Social Studies and Mathematics/Science. SAGES-3 is also used to assess verbal and nonverbal creativity, reasoning, and problem-solving.

- The Formal Observation of Exceptional Performance Questionnaire (completed by classroom teachers and parents) is used to provide evidence of exceptional performance in other areas.

Students who score in the 95th percentile or higher in two out of the three categories are eligible to proceed to the Tier 3 evaluation. Written notice is provided to parents with results of the Tier 2 Assessments.

### **Tier 3 Evaluation: *General Mental Ability***

- Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI) or Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI): Both of these tests are used to measure General Mental Ability (often known as IQ). The test is administered individually by district personnel.

Students who score a 130+ full scale IQ qualify for placement into the gifted program. Written notice is provided to parents with results. Permission to place is also sent to parents whose students meet all eligibility requirements. Upon receipt of written permission, the student is placed in the LEAP program at the student's corresponding school.

### **Placement**

In compliance with state guidelines, students must achieve in 3 of the 4 designated target areas with the inclusion of 130 full scale IQ on the intelligence test.

### **Appeals**

Parents receive written notice when a student does not meet eligibility. A parent may ask for a review of assessment data by the gifted coordinator. During the review, opportunities for enrichment will be discussed. If an error in testing is found, a reversal of decision for placement will be made. Otherwise, the initial decision will stand. Students may have two opportunities to meet the criteria for placement. Students may be re-evaluated after two years if they again meet the requirements to reactivate the referral. (For more information, please refer to School Board Policy IGBB).

## **LEAP Programming**

### **Elementary LEAP**

Students are exposed to materials, experiences, and information that are outside the bounds of the regular classroom curriculum, do not match age/grade expectancies, and introduce something new or unusual. Through extension opportunities, students are encouraged to elaborate on curriculum through the additional provision of instructional time, materials, or experiences through self-initiated study. Elementary LEAP students generally meet for a minimum of 150 minutes per week.

### **Middle School LEAP**

Similar to elementary, middle school students are exposed to materials, experiences, and information that are outside the bounds of the regular classroom curriculum, do not match age/grade expectancies and introduce something new or unusual. Through extension opportunities, students are encouraged to elaborate on curriculum through the additional provision of instructional time, materials, or experiences through self-initiated study. Students will continue to participate in a process-oriented curriculum that focuses on research, enhancing critical and creative thinking skills, and real world problem solving. Middle school LEAP is a part of the student's daily schedule and is a graded class.

### **High School LEAP**

Students meet with the high school gifted facilitator a minimum of two times per year. Meetings are held in large group, small group, or individually. Gifted facilitators provide extension opportunities that meet the individual needs of high school students. Some examples include improving executive functioning skills, analyzing course selection and course load, college entry test improvement, and writing and developing high school resumes and college entry essays,

## **Skill Development**

"Gifted learners need services provided by well-trained teachers, who challenge and support them, in order to fully develop their gifts and talents. By participating in gifted education programs, these learners can develop skills to help them positively shape and impact the world" (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education). The LEAP Program focuses on the following skills and embeds them within classroom activities in order to support the growth of our gifted learners.

### **Thinking Skills Development**

Develop creative thinking skills and appreciation of a variety of problem solving processes. Develop and encourage critical thinking skills. Develop logical thinking skills.

### **Inquiry/Reflection Development**

Expand knowledge and awareness of various fields of study. Develop new interests that might lead to more intensive independent investigations. Develop and demonstrate communication skills.

### **Independent Study Skills Development**

Further develop the ability to use various and documented resources for research. Plan and produce an independent investigation focusing on individual interests and/or needs. Analyze the information. Organize the information. Construct products, which effectively communicate the results of investigations. Write a research paper and present the findings of the Independent Study Research.

### Affective Skills Development

Develop an understanding of giftedness and an awareness of one's own strengths. Develop responsibility for one's own learning and organizational skills. Develop interpersonal skills.

### **Target Goals for LEAP Students to Meet**

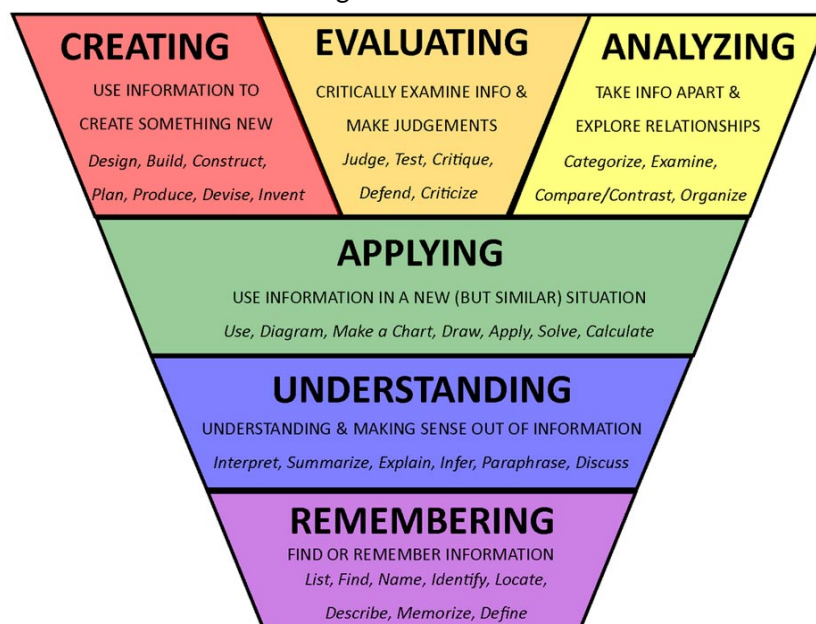
- **Goal 1 - Students will be INDEPENDENT LEARNERS who:** Know how to locate and use information. Utilize a variety of strategies, tools, and forms of technology to effectively meet their individual learning needs.
- **Goal 2 - Students will be EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS who:** Present ideas in a variety of contexts and express themselves appropriately and effectively. Listen to others for understanding.
- **Goal 3 - Students will be ADAPTABLE PROBLEM SOLVERS AND DECISION MAKERS who:** Think independently and creatively. Set and achieve individual goals. Be problem solvers who evaluate situations. Take informed risks for improvement and growth. Manage change. Have a growth mindset.
- **Goal 4 - Students will be RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE who:** Respect themselves and others. Exhibit a caring attitude towards their peers and take personal responsibility for their own actions.
- **Goal 5 - Students will be PRODUCTIVE QUALITY WORKERS who:** Demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills for entry into the workplace. Exhibit a positive work ethic and work cooperatively with others. Use technology as a tool to increase productivity. Achieve high standards of performance.

### **Classroom Focus**

LEAP students work on differentiated and challenging curriculum during their day. NOETIC challenge math, independent study, and exploratory units that focus on problem solving, reasoning, and creativity are incorporated. Below are descriptions of some of the programs that gifted learners participate in while attending LEAP classes.

- Independent Units of Study: These units are driven by student interest. They encourage students to dig deep, researching and building knowledge, then sharing what they have learned with their peers.
- Exploratory Units: Students explore various topics while attending LEAP classes. Unit lessons focus on Bloom's taxonomy while also building deeper level thinking skills.
- Affective Skill Development: Students participate in activities that help them understand what it means to be a gifted learner as well as develop an awareness of their own strengths. These activities help students develop various affective skills included but not limited to mental health and interpersonal skills.
- NOETIC challenge math: Elementary and 6th grade students participate in NOETIC challenge math, which is designed to hone young students' mathematical problem-solving skills and logical reasoning skills. NOETIC challenge math gives out challenging word problem assignments weekly. Problems are non-routine problem-solving questions that are adapted to many math competitions, including the Noetic Learning Math Contest. NOETIC challenge math is primarily designed for gifted elementary students.  
(Math is enhanced through core curricula at the 7th & 8th grade level)
- Current Events League: 6th grade students participate in the National Current Events League, which consists of four (4) meets (contests) held at the student's school during the school year. Each Meet consists of 30 multiple choice questions and may be administered comfortably within one class period. Each of the Meets will be based on current events in a given time frame.

- First Lego League: 7th grade students participate in FIRST® LEGO® League which introduces science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) through fun, exciting hands-on learning. Participants gain real-world problem solving experience through a guided, global robotics program, helping today's students and teachers build a better future together.
- Battle of the Brains: During odd ending years, (2021, 2023, etc.) 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th grade students participate in the Battle of the Brains competition, where they develop a proposal for a new exhibit at Science City. Student work in this real world competition is aligned to Next Generation Science Standards & Engineering Practices. The competition promotes teamwork, collaboration and executive functioning skills.



### Partnering with Parents

At the beginning of each school year, elementary and middle school families are invited to attend an informational night. During this shared time, LEAP facilitators will share information pertinent to the success of the gifted learner during the upcoming school year. LEAP facilitators will also share contact information with parents. Finally, parents will be given the opportunity to ask any questions.

Conferences are held during regular parent/teacher conference times in the fall and spring of the school year. If you would like for your student to be in attendance for these conferences, they are welcome. In fact, their attendance is encouraged.

### Important Reminders for Elementary Parents

LEAP services in the elementary classroom are provided through a pull-out program. As such, students leave their regular classroom setting to attend LEAP. On days when elementary students attend LEAP, **please take time** to connect with your child about their day. In the evening, have a brief discussion about what they learned in LEAP. Occasionally, additional information will be sent home with your student in their planner folder. Please check your child's folder regularly.

### Important Reminders for Elementary Classroom Teachers



### **L.E.A.P. Day Best Practices**

In an effort to address the needs of gifted students participating in the LEAP program and maximize their educational experiences, we request that the following guidelines be adhered to at the elementary level.

#### **Tests/Classroom Work**

When possible, *please avoid administering tests on a student's LEAP day.* With regard to daily work and assignments, *students are exempt from all standard classroom work while they attend LEAP.* Students should only be required to make up work that is necessary for an on-going project or to better understand a complex concept. Students should also be provided adequate time to complete the work.

#### **Special Events**

Occasionally, a field trip or special event will make it necessary for a student to miss a LEAP day. When possible, please avoid scheduling special events on a student's LEAP day. If a conflict is inevitable, the LEAP Instructor should be notified as soon as possible and the situation discussed with the student.

#### **New Content**

Instruction in the regular classroom continues on a student's LEAP day. However, any new concepts that are introduced in the gifted student's absence should be provided to them when they return to class. LEAP students should not be expected to obtain information on their own and should be given adequate time to learn the content.

### ***Important Reminders for Middle and High School Parents***

Middle school students have LEAP as part of their school day. High school students only see their LEAP facilitator a few times/year. As such, parents sometimes forget that their child may have additional needs. As such, it is important to continue to check-in with your child regularly. Celebrate your child's successes with them. Help them explore the many opportunities that are available as your child progresses through the secondary grades. Help your child maintain balance while exploring their interests. And, keep the lines of communication open with your child's LEAP facilitator.