

Program Evaluation: LEAP (Gifted) Program 2024-2025



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Leadership

- How is our mission determined?
- What is our purpose?

Team Members

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The purpose of the LEAP (Logic, Enrichment, Academics, Problem-solving) Program is to provide opportunities for gifted students to experience rigorous and relevant educational challenges by using higher-order critical and creative thinking skills, preparing them for future endeavors. The purpose statement for the LEAP Program was collaboratively developed.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the LEAP department was able to transition one of our part-time positions into a full-time position as we strive to meet the growing needs of the district. Additionally, we replaced one full-time team member with a different full-time team member. Having four team members allowed the LEAP department to split teaching responsibilities so that each team member could focus on either elementary or secondary students. Additionally, the LEAP department was able to dedicate one secondary facilitator to serve a half-time position at the high school. The high school provided a dedicated room for this individual.

Through this process, the need for additional staff was identified. A part-time tester, Kim Krueger, was hired. Kim administered all Tier 2 elementary tests during the fall of 2024. One person administering all SAGES-3 assessments, seeking and gathering data from the Formal Questionnaire of Exceptional Performance, and communicating with parents and teachers streamlined the process and allowed consistency across all four elementary buildings. Having a dedicated tester allowed flexibility in the testing schedule as Kim did not have to balance a classroom schedule alongside a testing schedule. Kim plans to add middle school Tier 2 assessments to her responsibilities during spring 2025.

Both middle school facilities aligned all programs during the 2023-2024 school year and moved into a modified block schedule. The alignment process removed Flex from Platte City Middle School students' schedules, causing LEAP classes to replace elective courses at both facilities. It also prevented many students from participating in programs that helped meet their individual needs. After much analysis and discussion, the LEAP department decided that middle school LEAP would replace a student's Social Studies class block. During the 24-25 school year, LEAP students received Social Studies instruction during their LEAP class, allowing content to be compacted and enriched by a gifted facilitator. The result of this action was that identified gifted students could now participate in the same number of elective classes as their general education peers.



Teaching Social Studies within the middle school LEAP block meant that some key units of study would no longer be available to middle school students. As such, the LEAP department evaluated each unit of study to determine its level of importance. The most important units were adapted for the elementary program. Starting with the 2024-2025 school year, elementary students will explore the brain unit and the Lego Robotics unit without the competition.

To prepare to provide instructions on social studies, the middle school LEAP facilitators met with Dr. Ellsworth, a professor of social studies from Northwest University. Dr. Ellsworth provided instruction on the most important skills for students to gain to be prepared for the real world. She also provided, and continues to provide, many resources that can be used to meet the needs of the LEAP students. During the 2024-2025 school year, middle school LEAP facilitators also began attending middle school social studies department meetings. The collaboration between general education social studies teachers and LEAP facilitators had a two-fold benefit. LEAP facilitators were able to ensure the instruction provided met the standards taught in the general education classroom. General education teachers could provide more high-level activities to general education students.

During PLDs this year, the LEAP department has worked with Derek Cavilla to develop a social-emotional education curriculum that aligns with the research surrounding the affective needs of gifted students. During the first PLD, Derek Cavilla met virtually with the LEAP team to provide a common foundational knowledge of current research. During the third PLD, LEAP facilitators developed a teacher-friendly definition and a student-friendly definition of each skill alongside a set of characteristics showing mastery of said skill. Afterward, the LEAP team researched activities that could be used to teach the skill explicitly. Plans are in place for the LEAP team to finish developing the curriculum by the end of the 2024-2025 school year and be ready for implementation in the 2025-2026 school year. Elementary LEAP teachers began finding ways to implement the work on Social Emotional Learning alongside the brain unit.

CSIP Goal

Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve overall and individual student academic performance.

Objective A-1

The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MAP-EOC will increase annually.

Customer Focus

- **Who are our customers relative to this program?**
- **How do we determine the needs of the customer?**
- **What are the needs of the customer?**

Eligibility for LEAP is aligned with Missouri state requirements as 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.” (SHB 474, Section 162.675 RSMo)



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). Students who score in the 95th percentile in reading or mathematics on FastBridge may be considered for further screening. Evaluation for placement consideration exists in stages.

Stage 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.

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

- SAGES-3. The SAGES-3 is a norm-referenced test used to identify gifted and/or talented students 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) provides evidence of exceptional performance in other areas.

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

Stage 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.

Placement

Students who score a 130+ full-scale IQ qualify for placement into the gifted program. Written notice with results is provided to parents. 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. 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.

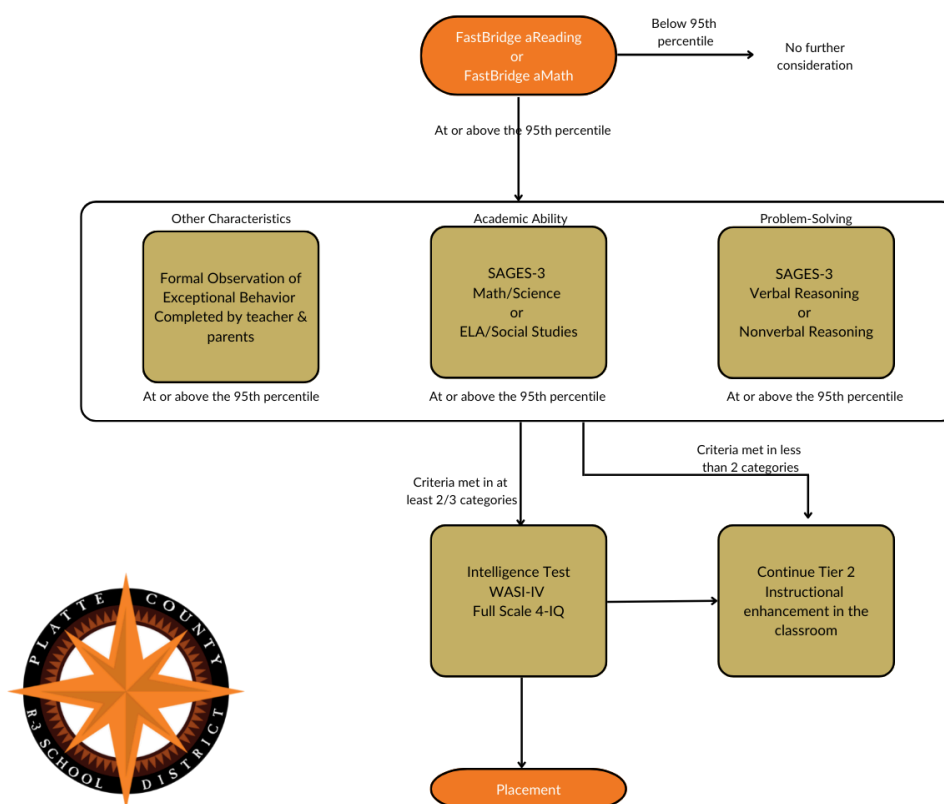
Focus Areas

- Proactive screening process based on data
- Focus on relevance and critical thinking skills
- Increased focus on the social-emotional needs of gifted students



- Current LEAP students: 144 (2015-2016), 138 (2014-2015), 112 (2016-2017), 142 (2017-2018), 154 (2018-19), 196 (2019-20), 158 (2020-21), 172 (2021-22), 188 (2022-23), 204 (2023-2024), 202 (2024-2025 to date)
- Analyzing placement data to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement
- Real-world learning within social studies is done at the middle school level, and field trips are made at the elementary level.
- Noetic Challenge Math provides advanced problem-solving opportunities for students in grades K-6.
- Shapegrams and 3D printers provide opportunities to develop perceptual reasoning skills.
- 150 minutes per week for elementary divided into two touches, class period for middle school, support and consultation for high school
- Additional college and career readiness support at the high school through a 1/3 FTE with a dedicated space.

LEAP Identification Process



Workforce Focus

- How do we determine our staff needs?
- What are we doing to support our staff to achieve our goals?

LEAP staff need collaboration time to calibrate pacing and delivery. Participation in building specific professional



development and activities has increased general education collaboration but taken away from LEAP-specific collaboration. To address the need for ongoing collaboration, LEAP staff will continue to have monthly meetings. With the additional time structured into our PLD, the LEAP department has purposefully divided operational and professional meetings. Operational focus occurs during the monthly meetings. Professional development occurs during PLD afternoons. Area-wide professional development for LEAP teachers has been beneficial and should be prioritized. During the 24-25 school year, LEAP staff have focused on building an effective curriculum while working alongside Derek Cavilla.. Additionally, subscriptions to Byrdseed.tv were purchased for each teacher. Byrdseed.tv provides many open-ended gifted activities that can be utilized to meet the needs of the gifted student, thus improving the craft of the LEAP facilitator.

Process

- What process/improvement actions did we focus on last year to improve this program?

Current Process Improvement Actions

- Implementation and evaluation of Fidelity Protocols in the identification process.
- Yearly update of LEAP Handbook and roll-out to all staff: [LEAP Program Gifted Education Handbook](#)
- High school programming and support are aligned with the needs assessment and research.
- Shift in identification processes to use FastBridge universal screening data.
- LEAP programming is delivered within the social studies block in the middle school.
- Collaboration on acceleration planning for all students outside of the LEAP classroom.
- Scaffolded spiraling instruction on the social-emotional needs of the LEAP student.
- Purposeful and targeted professional development with an expert in the affective needs of gifted students.
- Addition of an individual responsible for gifted assessment at the elementary. Soon to take over middle school assessments.

Prior Process Improvement Actions

- Additional staff members have allowed for increased collaboration, instructional efficiency, parent partnerships, and high school advisement
 - Data, advocacy, and college and career readiness for LEAP students beyond middle school
 - Added parental observation to identification criteria
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Measurement/Analysis/Knowledge

- What are the results of our SWOT analysis for this year?
- What are our measures to determine progress/success?

We currently use the following measures to analyze our progress:

- Parent Survey
- SWOT Analysis
- Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), End-of-Course (EOC)



LEAP Program SWOT ANALYSIS Key Themes and Recommendations

Summary of Key Points and Challenges:

- **Team Strengths & Collaboration:**
 - Strong, collaborative, and adaptable team focused on supporting students and each other.
 - Trust among teammates to prioritize student needs.
 - Commitment to continuous improvement and resource-sharing.
 - Transparent processes for identifying and supporting gifted students.
- **Current Initiatives:**
 - Expanding high school support programs.
 - Elementary staff is integrating new programs like Lego programming and brain units.
 - Middle school programs shifted to the Social Studies block, allowing for more electives.
 - Focus on social-emotional learning for gifted students through professional development.
 - Addition of a part-time assessor for elementary student testing and communication.
 - Advanced math opportunities are provided through Noetic for K-6 students.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Staffing & Resources:** More staff is needed to accommodate a growing student population and enhance high school programs.
 - **Space Constraints:** Limited space, especially at Siegrist, where students share a small classroom with the laundry room.
 - **Time & Curriculum Development:** Lack of protected preparation time for developing high-quality learning materials. Gifted education requires custom materials, which is time-intensive.
 - **Collaboration Time:** Insufficient time for collaboration, risking burnout and affecting quality.
 - **Equity in Space:** Inequitable learning spaces across locations, with some students meeting in inadequate spaces like closets.
 - **Balancing Expectations:** Managing differing expectations in middle school, particularly around scheduling and planning time for core and enrichment classes.
- **Future Needs & Focus:**
 - Develop strategies for supporting exceptional students twice and thrice.
 - Enhance Tier 2 instruction consultation with classroom teachers.
 - Explore ways to provide career exploration opportunities through guest speakers.
 - Continue developing social studies curriculum and real-world learning practices.
- **Concerns:**
 - Potential burnout due to increasing demands without additional support.
 - Lack of mutual planning time and relevant professional development.

Core Values:

Collaboration, flexibility, student-centered approach, and mutual investment in improvement.

Results

- **How are we doing? How have we done over time? How have we done compared to others (if applicable)?**

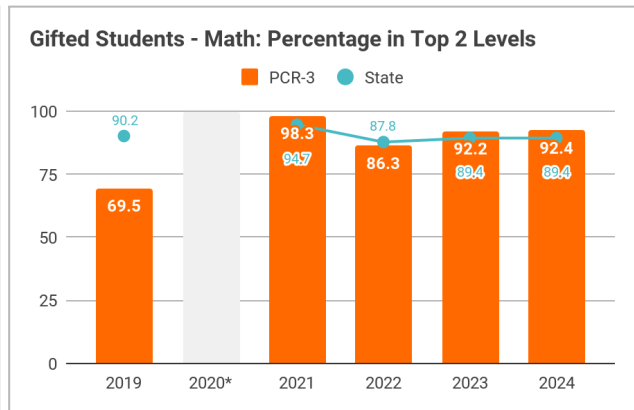
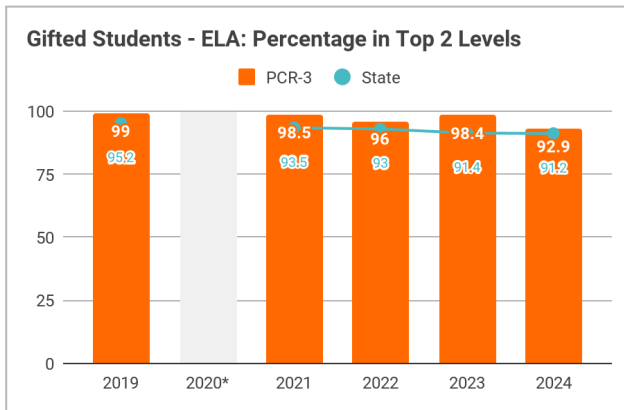


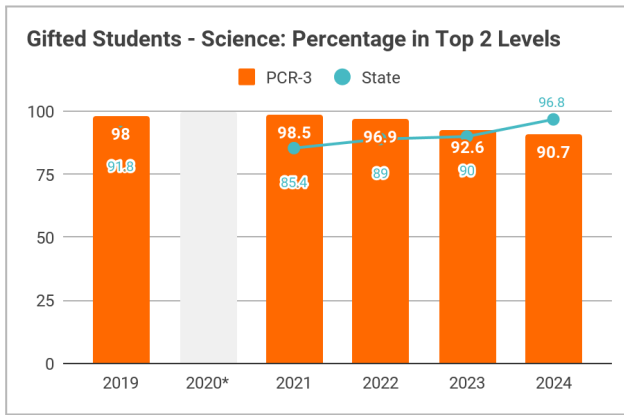
Parent Survey Data

I am satisfied with the services from LEAP, the District's gifted program. (Parents)					
Building	2019-20 SPI	2020-21 SPI	2021-22 SPI	2022-23 SPI	2023-24 SPI
<i>Pathfinder</i>	396.77	428.57	411.76	422.73	425.00
<i>Barry</i>	415.38	400	400	446.88	420.00
<i>PPMS</i>	-	-	-	-	414.29
<i>PCMS</i>	440.63	402.94	444	435.48	408.00
<i>PCHS*</i>	272.22	288.89	328	329.63	369.70
<i>Siegrist</i>	462.50	425.00	375	430.77	428.57
<i>Compass</i>	440.63	442.86	400	417.24	447.37
<i>District-Wide (# respondents)</i>	407.35 (136)	386.29 (124)	392.31 (117)	412.42 (110)	407.79 (77)

District Level MAP and EOC Assessment Results for LEAP students

Data shown as % of students in the Top 2 Levels





LEAP program goals flow directly from Tier 1 instruction and are aligned with the National Association of Gifted Children Standards. Instructional activities are aligned with the goals and are meant to increase the achievement of students already demonstrating proficiency in the general education classroom. In 2022, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released [Missouri Gifted Learner Outcomes \(M-GLO\)](#). An analysis and comparison of current LEAP practices to the M-GLO revealed a need for more specific creativity goals. LEAP facilitators provide classroom opportunities for students to meet these goals.

LEAP Program Goals

- The LEAP Program will increase the number of students who scored advanced on the MAP/EOC assessments.
- The LEAP Program will facilitate challenging learning opportunities that prepare students for future career and college readiness.

Objectives

- Annually, 95 percent of LEAP students will score advanced on the MAP/EOC assessments.
- Feedback on parent satisfaction will be gathered each year and used to analyze and improve gifted programming.

