

SPIRIT

Gifted Education

Seeking to Provide Individual Release of Intellectual Talent

ALL ABOUT SPIRIT

S.P.I.R.I.T. students at Sale simply learn in a different way. The activities in S.P.I.R.I.T. are different from and in addition to the regular classroom curriculum. The S.P.I.R.I.T. curriculum is centered around the following 6 criteria: Creativity, thinking skills, communication, research, group dynamics, self-directed learning, and behavioral attitudes. Social and emotional development, as well as career exploration, are also incorporated into the program.

The Referral Process

Note: Assessment for new students and students in grades 2-5 is ongoing, year-round. The annual referral of first grade students begins January 1. Notification of the test results will be included in the May report card. First grade students who are eligible will begin classes in the fall of their second grade year.

The mission of the Columbus Municipal School District program for intellectually gifted is to create a learning environment that fosters and encourages thinking, creativity, metacognition, healthy enriching relationships, and appropriate expectations and understanding of self.

CMUSD Gifted Education Goals:

- ✓ To provide qualitatively, differentiated and challenging learning beyond the regular curriculum through in-depth enrichment in order to develop and maintain our students' commitment to the love of learning as a lifelong process.
- ✓ To help students through self-awareness, better understand themselves, develop social interest, and a feeling of belonging in order to assist them in reaching their full potential.
- ✓ To help students develop independence and self-direction, to challenge them through various activities and mentors to help them become productive citizens of society.

CMSD Gifted Objectives:

To develop creativity, thinking skills, communication, research, group dynamics, self-directed learning, career exploration/life skills, and visual/performing arts.

Currently, CMSD provides programming for students who meet the criteria for intellectually gifted in grades 2-8.

A Mississippi eligibility ruling for gifted **MUST** be secured on all students served. Students with documented evidence of previous participation in a gifted program in another state or country must be assessed according to Mississippi criteria. Once a student has been recognized as gifted, there is no need to be reevaluated to benefit from gifted programs offered at other grade levels.

Identification Process:

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.

Referral Criteria:

A student shall satisfy a minimum of two of the following criteria before moving forward in the identification process:

- ✓ Group measure of intelligence that has been administered within the past twelve months
- ✓ Published characteristics of giftedness measure
- ✓ Published measure of creativity
- ✓ Published measure of leadership

Eligibility Determination:

The district uses its own Local Survey Committee to determine gifted eligibility. This committee is a district committee that meets regularly. The committee adheres to the MDE's required criteria (evidence of a least three of the required criteria PLUS an individual norm-referenced intelligence test with a minimal score at the 90th percentile) to warrant a ruling of ELIGIBLE.

Re-testing:

Students may be tested a maximum of two times at the expense of the school district. A child who has been found to be ineligible twice through the district-administered

testing may be tested privately, at the expense of the parent. Test results showing evidence of eligibility as a result of a private administration of testing will be accepted if (1) the child met all referral and assessment criteria within the accepted timelines and (2) there is proof that the person administering the test possesses the proper licensure.

Contact Information:

Principals can give information relative to program offerings at individual buildings. Copies of the state's regulation are available at the Brandon Central Services Center upon request.

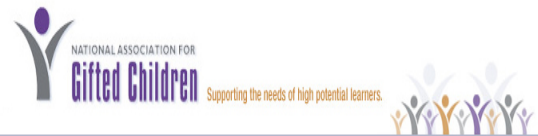
SPIRIT Online Resources

Gifted Organizations and Publishing Companies



www.muw.edu/magc

Mississippi Association for Gifted Children



www.nagc.org

National Association for Gifted Children

Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

www.gifted.uconn.edu

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented



www.MindwareOnline.com

Great gifts for students!



www.prufrock.com

Books for teachers, parents, and students



www.freespirit.com

Books for teachers, parents, students



www.muw.edu/ccl



www.criticalthinking.com

Books for Teachers, Parents, and Students:

*These books can be obtained by contacting the SPIRIT teacher
and are available for checkout.*

The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids by Sally Walker, Free Spirit Publishing

When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers by Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith, Free Spirit
Publishing

You Know your Child is Gifted When... by Judy Galbraith, Free Spirit Publishing

The Survival Guide for Teachers of Gifted Kids by Jim Delisle, Free Spirit Publishing

Girls and Young Women Leading the Way by Karnes and Bean, Free Spirit Publishing

The Gifted Kids Survival Guide for Ages 10 and Under by Judy Galbraith, Free Spirit Publishing

Pshychology for Kids (I and II) by Jonni Kincher, Free Spirit Publishing

Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom by Susan Winebrenner, Free Spirit Publishing

Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom by Smutny, Walker, and Meckstroth,
Free Spirit Publishing

Learning to be a Durable Person by Mary Hennenfent, McGee-Keiser Publishing

The Me I'm Learning to Be by Imogene Forte, Kids Stuff Publishing

Camps for Gifted Students:

www.muw.edu/summerdiscovery

www.ce.msstate.edu/camps/scholars.html

www.chesscamp.com

www.usm.edu/gifted/sfy/services_for_youth.html

www.centerforcreativescholoars.com/exploration.htm

Web Resources for Gifted Kids:

<http://www.coolmath.com/graphit> Online graphing calculator

<http://www.imaginationcubed.com/LaunchPage> Virtual Interactive White Board

http://www.spanishprograms.com/learn_spanish.htm Learn Spanish

<http://www.princetonreview.com/vocabminute> Learn challenging vocabulary

<http://www.boogle.com> Google with a twist

www.edheads.com Virtual surgery, simple machines, crashes, etc.)

www.ramogrames.com

www.funbrain.com

www.timeforkids.com

www.nationalgeographic.com

BRIGHT CHILDREN VS. GIFTED CHILDREN

A Bright Child:	A Gifted Learner:
knows the answers	asks the questions
is interested	is highly curious
has good ideas	has wild silly ideas
works hard	plays around, yet tests well
answers the questions	discusses in detail, elaborates
top of the group	beyond the group
listens with interest	shows strong feelings/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
completes assignments	initiates projects
is receptive	is intense
copies accurately	creates a new design
absorbs information	manipulates information
technician	inventor
good memorizer	good guesser
straightforward, sequential	thrives on complexity
is alert	is keenly observant
is pleased with own learning	is highly self-critical

Underachievement: What Is It? What Causes It?

www.carolyncoil.com/ezine.htm (Volume 1, Number 3)

What is underachievement?

Underachievement is one of those popular “catchall” terms that means something different to nearly everyone who hears it. In one sense, we are all underachievers. Studies have been done which show that all humans use only a small percentage of their total brain capacity. Additionally, most of us could pinpoint projects or activities, tests or papers where we could have put forth more effort than we actually did. Almost everyone can recall something in which they could have done a better job.

However, the underachieving students we are talking about are more than this. These students have a significant gap between their ability and what they actually produce and achieve in school. This type of underachievement is usually degenerative. Signs begin in the early grades and the effects are cumulative as the child grows older.

Underachievers are students who, in a significant way, are not working up to their potential. These students often see “YOU CAN DO BETTER” written boldly in red on homework, class work, and test papers, and receive this message in many other ways, both verbally and non-verbally. However, for a variety of reasons they continue to do much less than they are capable of.

What types of kids are underachievers?

The vast majority of underachieving elementary or primary school students are boys. This is due, in part, to the traditional structure of the school itself with its emphasis on straight rows of desks, quiet learning, and compliant behavior. Such a school setting is usually more suitable for girls than boys.

When adolescence comes, some girls who have done well in elementary school suddenly develop an interest in boys and decide it isn’t “cool” to be so smart. Many prefer not to demonstrate their intelligence, feeling that if they do, the boys will not like them as much.

How do underachievers differ from achieving students?

Underachievers usually have low self-esteem and a fear of failure. They are often described as “immature” or “behavior problems”. Most lack motivation for schoolwork and say that they are bored with school. Many underachieving students do not need to study in the primary grades and, as a result, they may lack basic study, time management, and organizational skills by the time they reach the middle or intermediate level. Gifted and talented students may become underachievers if they have not been challenged in school and have never discovered how to learn something that is difficult.

How do schools contribute to underachievement?

Reasons for underachievement may come from the school. Some teachers have impossible standards while others may have low expectations of their students. Either way, underachievement can result. Other teachers are too strict and lack patience with students who ask difficult questions, do not conform, are divergent rather than convergent thinkers, etc. This type of classroom climate eventually turns students off to school.

Many times, the make-up of the school system itself contributes to underachievement. The conforming nature of the school setting, inappropriate or dull curricula, days and weeks spent on drill and practice for standardized tests, and inflexibility in scheduling can lead to underachievement in many students.

Gifted students may become underachievers when the grade level curriculum does not challenge them and meet their needs. If a gifted student is only presented with work and concepts he already knows and there is no attempt to differentiate the curriculum, he or she will soon decide school is “boring” and really is not the place to learn anything new. This attitude often leads to underachievement.

Do parents and the child’s home life affect underachievement?

Underachievers often come from homes where there is considerable instability within the family unit. When families have other worries to deal with, such as marital discord, job pressures, financial concerns, a lack of emotional support, no leisure or family time, and isolation from extended family, supporting day-to-day educational tasks becomes less of a priority. Often, what is happening at school just gets lost in the shuffle.

Well meaning parents who place a high priority on educational achievement sometimes put too much pressure on their children to achieve in school. The child may feel he or she could never live up to parental expectations. Many times, one child in such a family will become a high achiever while the other will rebel against the pressure to succeed and will become an underachiever.

Many children are involved in too many extra-curricular activities. There are some children who spend every afternoon and evening in one activity or another and then attempt to do their homework late at night. Not only are such children stressed out by having too much of a good thing, many also become underachievers because they cannot keep up such a frantic pace.

For parents, being an encourager of educational achievement without exerting undue pressure requires striking a delicate balance. There is no magic “balancing formula”. Each parent has to decide where that point of balance needs to be with each child.

What Can Teachers Do to Help Underachievers?

www.carolyncoil.com/ezine.htm (Volume 1, Number 4)

Following are some practical strategies teachers can use in working with underachievers. Because the causes of underachievement are so varied, so are the strategies that can be used by teachers (and parents) to deal with this problem.

1. Maintain contact between home and school. Communicate in numerous ways: parent conferences, home visits, voice mail, cell phones, fax, e-mail, notes, video conferences and phone calls. Take advantage of new technologies as you communicate with parents.
2. Discourage the “Parent to the Rescue” syndrome. Work with parents so that they won’t constantly rescue their child when he or she forgets homework or another needed item. Work with parents so that they can develop realistic, enforceable consequences when their child does not exhibit responsible behavior.
3. Emphasize goal setting, showing students how life success is linked to school performance. Have former students come and talk to your class about the value of school in terms of success outside of school. E-mail interviews are also a good way to link students to the outside world.
4. Encourage more reading and less TV, video, computer games and surfing the Internet at home. Reading anything, regardless of what it is, will generally increase achievement.
5. Use concepts from the world of sports as analogies for goal setting in life. Success in most sports involves working toward a goal. Use words such as goalie, goal post, personal best, game plan, etc. to show the conceptual links between the world of sports and the world of school.
6. Hold students accountable for actions, behavior, materials, and work. Don’t use threats you can’t carry out. Instead, say what you mean and follow through on it.
7. Help underachievers identify their areas of strength. Most underachievers are painfully aware of their weaknesses, but every underachiever has many strengths as well. Notice these strengths and work to enhance them!
8. Use whole group instruction, individualized study, heterogeneous grouping and cluster or ability grouping, each as they are appropriate for teaching and learning goals and outcomes.
9. Use various forms of assessment. Schools should not be solely “test prep” institutions. Assessing learning can be done in many ways. Underachievers are often not good test takers. Try performance assessments, rubrics, checklists, and portfolios to document learning success.
10. Use the expertise and experience of other teachers in deciding on strategies to use with your underachievers. Collaborate by sharing strategies you know work with underachieving students. Plan strategies jointly for dealing with your underachievers.

11. Plan lessons that involve all of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, a variety of learning styles and modalities, and/or all of levels of Bloom's Taxonomy or Webb's Depth of Knowledge.
12. Make sure your lessons give the opportunity for students to use higher level thinking skills. Underachievers are often bored with low level thinking yet may be great problem solvers when given more complex and challenging problems.
13. Use brain-based learning theories to develop interdisciplinary, integrated teaching units.
14. Provide hands-on learning experiences. This is particularly important for kinesthetic, concrete random learners, a description that fits many underachievers.
15. Use outside resources and school staff to offer specialized courses based on student interests. Sometimes an interesting mini-course will be just the thing to give an underachiever a successful school experience and motivation to do more.
16. Identify specific organizations skills your underachievers need to learn. Work on these skills one at a time. Show your underachievers practical ways to become more organized.
17. Include classroom activities that increase skill in memorization. Memorizing successfully increases self-confidence and builds the base for other types of school success.
18. Teach each underachieving student with an achieving partner of equal ability. This works well because the achieving partner will usually encourage the underachiever. Don't pair achievers and underachievers of unequal ability.
19. Be intentional about teaching study skills. These are not automatic for most students, and tend to be particularly difficult for underachievers. Telling an underachiever to study without showing him what that means and how to do it is a waste of time.
20. Have students discuss and think about success and failure. Talk about the fear of failure but also the fear of success. Address issues such as test anxiety and perfectionism. Dealing with these issues in a positive, proactive and helpful manner is one way to boost achievement.

Motivating Underachievers: 10 Strategies for Parents

www.carolyncoil.com/ezine.htm (Volume 1, Number 4)

Following are some practical strategies parents can use in working with underachievers. Because the causes of underachievement are so varied, so are the strategies that can be used by parents (and teachers) to deal with this problem.

1. Don't use "put-downs" and sarcasm in dealing with your child. Even if he is driving you crazy and a sarcastic remark would make you feel better, there is no long-term beneficial result from doing this.
2. Emphasize what your child has learned from an assignment or activity, even if mistakes were made. All of us learn a great deal from our failures and mistakes. Help your child understand this and that all of us make mistakes from time to time.
3. Be aware of times your underachiever is trying to manipulate you. Underachievers are particularly adept at manipulating adults, and experiencing success in this behavior only makes underachievement worse. Don't use threats you can't carry out! This is always an opportunity for your child to manipulate you.
4. Be aware of your child's areas of intense interest and build on these. Use success in an interest outside of school as an encouragement for success in school. Share your child's special interests with the teacher. He or she may be able to use these to motivate your child.
5. Don't overload your child with activities! Some students are underachievers simply because they have too much to do and too many demands on their time. One or two extra-curricular activities a week are enough for most children.
6. Promote a love of reading in your home. Designate one night a week as "No TV night" and have a "Reading Area" where the only thing that can be done there is reading.
7. Discover your child's academic weakness. Brainstorm ways to make learning fun in this area. Create a game or song that makes learning easier.
8. Encourage your child to teach things he or she knows to someone younger. Find an older child or mentor to work with your child in an area of interest or in a difficult subject.
9. Set aside a "Study Time" in your home every night. No activities other than studying are allowed during study time. Be a lifelong learner yourself and model good studying behavior during study time.
10. With the classroom teacher, devise a system of parent-teacher communication. Take advantage of new technologies. Use e-mail, school or teacher websites, homework hotlines, and other forms of communication when available. Don't be afraid to contact the teacher. It is much easier to work on a problem together than for each of you to struggle with it on your own!