

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendations of the Baton Rouge Association for Gifted and Talented Students Task Force on Resolution of Current Critical Issues in the Gifted Program

BACKGROUND

The Board of Directors of the Baton Rouge Association for Gifted and Talented Students (BRAGTS) commissioned a task force of 30 members (parents, teachers, administrators) to generate recommendations for the EBRPSS Gifted and Talented Programs for the 2008-2009 school year and beyond.

The primary concern is the declining numbers of students participating in the EBRPSS Gifted and Talented Programs. Enrollment data from October 2006 compared to October 2007 shows a decline in the number of gifted students in the EBRPSS of more than 10%. Available data suggests that the potential population of gifted students in the EBRPSS could be greater than 3000 versus the current population of less than 800.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations contained in this report for the 2008-2009 school year include expanding the availability of self-contained Gifted/Talented classes to all grade levels at Parkview Elementary, designating Glasgow Middle as a Gifted/Talented Academy serving grades pre-K through 8, and designating McKinley Senior High School as a combined Gifted/Talented/Academic Magnet Academy.

The continued support of the Gifted and Talented Programs at all current sites is recommended.

The recommendations also include emphasis on implementation of gifted screening of all kindergarten students (approved by the EBRPSS School Board in March 2007) and emphasis on support and marketing of the Gifted and Talented programs.

It is recommended that a joint task force comprised of EBRPSS School Board designees and BRAGTS be formed to study and make recommendations addressing the decline in numbers of students in the Gifted and Talented Programs. The task force should bring recommendations to the EBRPSS School Board on or before the October 2008 board meeting.

The continued support of the EBRPSS Administration and School Board is requested to implement these recommendations.



Recommendations of the Baton Rouge Association for Gifted and Talented Students Task Force on Resolution of Current Critical Issues in the Gifted Program

1.0 Preface

- 1.1 The following documentation is a result of work done by a task force of 30 members (parents, teachers, administrators) commissioned by the Board of Directors of the Baton Rouge Association for Gifted and Talented Students (hereafter known as BRAGTS).
- 1.2 Recommendations are made on the basis of the best available data at the time and could be subject to change as additional data become available.
- 1.3 This report has the unanimous approval of the currently active members of the BRAGTS Board of Directors.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In October 2007, as current school year enrollment figures were released, it became readily apparent that the numbers of identified self-contained gifted students had reached a critical low point across almost all sites.
 - 2.1.1 Almost all self-contained sites had experienced double-digit percentage decreases just since 2006 (see Appendix 1).
- 2.2 At that time, the BRAGTS Board requested and received a meeting with Superintendent Charlotte Placide and Chief Academic Officer Robert Stockwell. Also in attendance were Director of Magnet Programs Carlos Sam and Supervisor of Gifted and Talented (G/T) Programs Sherry Scardina.
 - 2.2.1 The BRAGTS Board requested that an ad hoc task force be formed by the superintendent to study the problems and to recommend solutions to the School Board. The superintendent declined this request and suggested that the BRAGTS Board pursue the matter.
 - 2.2.2 The result of this meeting was the formation of a BRAGTS task force that was charged with the mission of researching and recommending strategies for saving the self-contained gifted program in this district.
 - 2.2.3 The task force was divided into 6 actionable subgroups.
 - 2.2.3.1 School System Interactions (School Board, System Staff, G/T Office, Principals, Site Coordinators): Outreach subcommittee
 - 2.2.3.2 Public Relations: Promotion and Education (Media, Advertisement, Parents)

- 2.2.3.3 Political Liaison (EBR Officials, Legislators)
- 2.2.3.4 Determination of Alternatives (Charter Schools, Autonomous Schools, Dedicated G/T Sites, Combined Dedicated Magnet/G/T Sites)
- 2.2.3.5 State Department of Education and BESE Contacts
- 2.2.3.6 Data Acquisition

3.0 The Issues

- 3.1 For over 10 years the numbers of identified gifted students at the self-contained gifted sites have declined to the point of reaching a low critical mass threshold.
 - 3.1.1 As an example, the self-contained program at Glen Oaks Park Elementary at its startup in 1996 had enough identified gifted students to form two sections of 15 students each at every grade level. Today that program has a total of only 18 identified gifted students across all grade levels (Appendix 4).
- 3.2 The total number of identified gifted students has declined from several thousand in the early 1990's to only 785 students as of the October 2007 count (Appendix 3).
 - 3.2.1 Percentage declines at each of the self-contained sites since October 2006 ranged from a low of 1.7% to a maximum of 31.1%, with an overall percentage decrease of 14.2% with respect to self-contained students across all sites combined from October 2006 to the latest counts of November 2007. (Appendices 1-3)
 - 3.2.2 It has been estimated that with the student population in Baton Rouge, there should be at least 3000 identified gifted students. (calculation included in FAQ)
 - 3.2.3 A number of EBRPSS administrators and staff involved with the G/T program have stated emphatically that if an immediate intervention is not affected, the self-contained program will not survive past two more years.
- 3.3 Based on survey data and personal communications, there are a number of reasons given for the continual decline of the identified gifted numbers at the self-contained sites.
 - 3.3.1 Location of the G/T sites far away from the geographic demographic base served by the program.
 - 3.3.1.1 This factor also relates to busing issues that are most important to parents of elementary students.
 - 3.3.2 Instability of the Gifted Program.
 - 3.3.2.1 During the last 18 years it was not uncommon for a given student to attend as many as 7 different schools from pre-K through 12th grade to receive gifted services.
 - 3.3.2.2 A number of certified teachers left the program due to having to relocate so often.
 - 3.3.3 The formation and funding of dedicated academic magnet schools which are far more attractive to parents of G/T students and which are located closer to the gifted demographic base, with a clear pathway into Baton Rouge Magnet High School.
 - 3.3.4 Perceptions by the general public.
 - 3.3.4.1 Safety and discipline issues at inner city sites.

- 3.3.4.2 Higher quality of education of Baton Rouge Magnet High School compared to the McKinley Senior High School Gifted Program.
- 3.3.5 Unpalatable infrastructure issues at each of the sites.
- 3.3.6 Insufficient information from EBRPSS staff about the nature of the Gifted Program.
 - 3.3.6.1 Lack of aggressive marketing of the program.
- 3.3.7 Under-identification of G/T students within the district.
 - 3.3.7.1 The School Board approved policy of testing every kindergartner has not been implemented.
- 3.3.8 Usage of the program by the EBR School System
 - 3.3.8.1 To effect desegregation.
 - 3.3.8.2 To effect enhancement of high-stakes accountability test scores at the given sites.
- 3.4 Scholastic Academy Program
 - 3.4.1 The Scholastic Academy (SA) Program was established by the EBRPSS under the Consent Decree as a potential pathway for qualified minority children to be identified within a two-year period into the gifted ranks. Each year the EBRPSS must apply for a waiver from the state to allow these students to be taught alongside the identified gifted students. The program was expanded to include all races, and research indicates that the two year maximum period for entry has often been extended for longer periods.
 - 3.4.1.1 With the resolution of the Consent Decree, the state has ruled that the SA program, after a “grandfathered” period, will only be allowed in special circumstances (transfers into EBR from out-of-district and private/parochial schools) for grades 7 - 12 beginning in July 2007, and that, in any case, the two-year maximum limit for any given child will be audited.
 - 3.4.1.1.1 SA students make up significant numbers of students receiving gifted services at the middle (Glasgow, 36%; Westdale, 45%; Woodlawn, 56%) and high (McKinley, 47%) schools (Appendix 4).
 - 3.4.1.2 The impact of the state SA Program ruling on Gifted Program enrollment in the next two years is obvious.
 - 3.4.1.3 Historically, fewer than 20% of SA students make it into the identified gifted ranks across all grade levels, with higher percentages at early grade levels (4th grade and below).

4.0 Data Collection

- 4.1 Data were requested from the EBRPSS staff in November 2007 (Appendix 5). Item 1 was the only request that received a response and the results are listed in Appendix 4.
 - 4.1.1 Results indicate critical issues in enrollment of identified, gifted students at all self-contained elementary sites except Buchanan, although even at that site there is only one section each at grades pre-K – 2. This downward trend at the earlier grade levels is seen across all elementary sites.
 - 4.1.1.1 Two (2) of the five (5) self-contained elementary sites have had to combine classes across grade levels.
 - 4.1.2 Both middle school sites experienced large decreases in enrollment of identified G/T students with Westdale Middle indicating the largest percentage decrease (31.1%) of all the gifted sites. Glasgow Middle had a decline of 14.9%.
 - 4.1.3 McKinley High School had a decrease of 7.5% from 2006, with the incoming 9th grade class listed as the smallest of the 4 classes and the dual-exceptionality students (both gifted and talented) significantly lower than any of the other grade levels.
 - 4.1.3.1 The primary reason given for the declines in grades 6 – 12 was the attraction of the dedicated academic magnet schools.
- 4.2 The Outreach Subcommittee interviewed principals and site coordinators at a select number of G/T sites. This process is ongoing.
 - 4.2.1 A summary of consensus comments is located in Appendix 6.
 - 4.2.2 The interview instrument can be found in Appendix 7.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1** The BRAGTS task force, with the approval of the Board of Directors of the BRAGTS, makes the following recommendations with regard to current critical issues in the Gifted Program with special emphasis on the self-contained program. Site selections are based on existing programs, location, support of administrators and teachers, infrastructure, and potential for growth.
- 5.1.1** For the 2008-09 school year, designate Glasgow Middle School as a Gifted/Talented Academy, comprised of grades pre-K – 8 G/T and SA students.
 - 5.1.2** For the 2008-09 school year, establish self-contained classes at all grade levels at Parkview Elementary for G/T and SA students.
 - 5.1.3** For the 2008-09 school year, designate McKinley Senior High School as a combined Gifted/Talented/Academic Magnet Academy.
 - 5.1.4** Form a joint task force comprised of EBRPSS School Board designees and BRAGTS to study and make recommendations addressing the decline in numbers of students in the G/T and SA Programs, especially the 50% decline of students from grade 8 to grade 9, by the October 2008 meeting of the EBRPSS School Board.
 - 5.1.5** All current self-contained and resource sites should be supported by the EBRPSS in order to serve all areas of the parish. This support needs to include, but not be limited to, increased publicity for each site, increased efforts to identify G/T students, and inclusion of Gifted/Talented in the site name or designation.
 - 5.1.5.1** The BRAGTS, as stated in its bylaws, supports G/T programs wherever they may be located; the BRAGTS is strongly in favor of the retention and development of the current sites, including the newly-formed resource sites in the southeastern part of the district and the necessary elementary sites across the district.
 - 5.1.6** Implement the School Board policy approved March 2007 of screening all kindergartners across the district.
 - 5.1.7** Implement an aggressive marketing strategy to focus on the G/T program.
 - 5.1.8** Make every administrative effort to channel magnet students through the academic magnet pathway and gifted students through the gifted pathway.

6.0 Epilogue

- 6.1** The EBRPSS self-contained Gifted Program has been lauded by national, state and local experts as an exemplary program. Its impact is beyond question. Through the years, the gifted students, and the schools they have attended, have brought much praise and fame to the EBRPSS through their awards, achievements and accomplishments. The program owes much of its success to the supportive administrators and dedicated teachers who have functioned successfully in times of great adversity and instability in the program.
- 6.2** The G/T program transcends race, color, gender, creed, socioeconomic status and national origin; it is, by its very nature, a diverse program.
- 6.3** If an immediate intervention is not affected by the EBRPSS, the demise of the self-contained program is imminent.
- 6.4** Change tends to elicit concerns. Appendix 8 includes an FQA section to address some of the concerns of stakeholders in this process.

Appendix 1: Percentage Changes in Identified Gifted Counts from Oct 2006 to Nov 2007

	Oct 2006	Nov 2007	% Change			
Buchanan	117	115	-1.7%			
Glen Oaks Park	24	18	-25.0%			
Westminster PK	1	1	0.0%			
Magnolia Woods PK	5	N/A				
All Old Elementary	297	250	-15.8%			
Glasgow Middle	174	148	-14.9%			
Westdale Middle	180	124	-31.1%			
Woodlawn Middle	N/A	19				
All Middle	354	291	-17.8%			
McKinley High	227	210	-7.5%			
Parkview	N/A	15				
Audubon	N/A	1				
Shenandoah	N/A	23				
Wedgewood	N/A	4				
All New Elementary	N/A	43		Note: Only 2 students of this total in self-contained at Parkview		
All New Sites		62				
All Schools Self-Contained Program	878	753	-14.2%			
All Schools Including Resource	878	813	-7.40%			

Appendix 2 : GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM COUNT 2006-07 (Oct. 1, 2006)

SCHOOL	GIFTED BLACK	GIFTED NON-BLACK	TOTAL GIFTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY-BLACK	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY-NON-BLACK	TOTAL SA STUDENTS	G/SA TOTAL	PERCENT BLACK	PERCENT NON-BLACK
Bernard Terrace	28	32	60	13	22	35	95	43%	57%
Brookstown	29	30	59	17	22	39	98	47%	53%
Brownfields	29	2	31	36	3	39	70	93%	7%
Buchanan	24	93	117	5	12	17	134	22%	78%
Glen Oaks Park	20	4	24	13	4	17	41	80%	20%
Brookstown Pre-K	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0%	100%
Glen Oaks Park Pre-K	0	0	0	6	1	7	7	86%	14%
Magnolia Woods Pre-K	2	3	5	0	10	10	15	13%	87%
Westminster Pre-K	1	0	1	4	5	9	10	50%	50%
PRE-K TOTAL	3	3	6	10	19	29	35	37%	63%
ELEMENTARY TOTAL	133	164	297	94	82	176	473	48%	52%
Glasgow Middle	38	136	174	37	72	109	283	27%	73%
Westdale Middle	104	76	180	94	75	169	349	57%	43%
MIDDLE TOTAL	142	212	354	131	147	278	632	43%	57%
McKinley High	95	132	227	86	110	196	423	43%	57%
GIFTED/SA TOTAL	370	508	878	311	339	650	1528	45%	55%
SCHOOLS WITH TALENTED ONLY	TALENTED BLACK	TALENTED NON-BLACK	TALENTED TOTAL					%BLACK	%NON-BLACK
Gifted Sites	85	11	96					89%	11%
BRCVPA	6	27	33					18%	82%
Forest Heights	3	3	6					50%	50%
McKinley Middle	15	18	33					45%	55%
Baton Rouge High	38	179	217					18%	82%
TALENTED TOTAL	147	238	385						
G&T GRAND TOTAL	517	746	1263			GIFTED/TALENTED/SA TOTAL	1913	43%	57%

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM COUNT - OCTOBER 2006

Scholastic Academy Non-Black Count includes students of "Limited English" background and students identified pending review of evaluation by EBR Pupil Appraisal Services.

Appendix 3 : GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM COUNT 2007-2008 (10/10/2007)

SCHOOL	GIFTED BLACK	GIFTED NON-BLACK	TOTAL GIFTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY-BLACK	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY-NON-BLACK	TOTAL SA STUDENTS	G/SA TOTAL	PERCENT BLACK	PERCENT NON-BLACK
Audubon	1	0	1	15	7	22	23	70%	30%
Bernard Terrace	12	28	40	7	13	20	60	32%	68%
Brookstown	25	24	49	22	11	33	82	57%	43%
Brownfields	27	1	28	40	1	41	69	97%	3%
Buchanan	23	88	111	7	16	23	134	22%	78%
Glen Oaks Park	15	3	18	29	0	29	47	94%	6%
Non-Gifted Site	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	100%	0%
Parkview	1	11	12	20	33	53	65	32%	68%
Shenandoah	3	21	24	7	26	33	57	18%	82%
Wedgewood	3	1	4	14	16	30	34	50%	50%
Buchanan Pre-K	0	6	6	2	8	10	16	13%	88%
Glen Oaks Park Pre-K	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	100%	0%
Parkview Oaks Pre-K	0	2	2	4	9	13	15	27%	73%
Westminster Pre-K	0	0	0	2	11	13	13	15%	85%
Pre-K TOTAL	0	8	8	11	28	39	47	23%	77%
ELEMENTARY TOTAL	111	185	296	172	151	323	619	46%	54%
Glasgow Middle	27	121	148	22	64	86	234	21%	79%
Westdale Middle	85	38	123	63	40	103	226	65%	35%
Woodlawn Middle	2	17	19	8	15	23	42	24%	76%
MIDDLE TOTAL	114	176	290	93	119	212	502	41%	59%
McKinley High	92	107	199	91	97	188	387	47%	53%
TOTALS	317	468	785	356	367	723	1508	45%	55%
TALENTED SERVICES ONLY	TALENTED BLACK	TALENTED NON-BLACK	TALENTED TOTAL					PERCENT BLACK	PERCENT NON-BLACK
Gifted Sites	117	70	187					63%	37%
BRCVPA	12	29	41					29%	71%
Forest Heights	5	3	8					63%	38%
McKinley Middle	26	12	38					68%	32%
Baton Rouge High	43	146	189					23%	77%
TALENTED TOTAL	203	260	463					44%	56%
GIFTED + TALENTED GRAND TOTAL	520	728	1248		GIFTED+TALENTED+SA TOTAL	1971		44%	56%

Scholastic Academy Non-Black Count includes students of "Limited English" background and students identified pending review of evaluation by EBR Pupil Appraisal Services.

Appendix 4: Gifted and Talented Program Counts by Site, Type of Program and Grade Level

Note: The following seven (7) pages contain summary counts for all Gifted and/or Talented sites in EBRPSS.

Some talented-only sites have identified gifted students on site who are not receiving services as indicated.

BERNARD TERRACE	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Self Contained	K	1		3		
	1	5		5		
	2	7		6		
	3	9		2		
	4	11		1		
	5	9		3		
Resource	K					
	1					
	2					
	3			3		
	4					
	5					
SCHOOL TOTAL		42	0	23	0	0

(No Talented Services at this site)

BROOKSTOWN	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Self Contained	1	9		2		
	2	5		6	1	
	3	4	3	1	2	2
	4	6	7	2	1	1
	5	6	7	2	2	9
Resource	K			1		
	1			5		
	2			1		
	3			1		
	4			2		
	5			4		
SCHOOL TOTAL		30	17	27	6	12

BROWNFIELDS	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Self Contained	K*	1		3		
	1*	3		3		
	2	3		12		
	3	5		6		
	4	4	1	7		
	5	8	2	1		1
Resource	K			1		
	1			2		
	2			3		
	3			3		
	4			4		
	5			0		
SCHOOL TOTAL		24	3	45	0	1

* = combination class

BUCHANAN	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Self Contained	PK	6		10		
	K	4		10		
	1	15		2		
	2	14	2			
	3	8	2	1		
	3	8	2		1	
	4	11	3	1		
	4	8	6	3		1
	5	7	5	2		2
	5	8	6	1		
Resource	K			2		
	1			1		
	2			1		
	3					
	4					
	5			2		
SCHOOL TOTAL		89	26	36	1	3

GLEN OAKS PARK	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Self Contained	PK*			3		
	K*			5		
	*1	1		2		
	*2	5		7		
	3*	3		1		
	4*			5		
	5	9		3		
Resource	K					
	1			3		
	2					
	3			4		
	4			1		
	5			3		
SCHOOL TOTAL		18	0	37	0	0

* = combination class

(No Talented Services at this site)

PARKVIEW	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Self Contained	PK	2		13		
	K			10		
Resource	1	4		7		
	2	3		6		
	3	1		8		
	4	3		5		
	5	2		15		
SCHOOL TOTAL		15	0	64	0	0

(No Talented Services at this site)

AUDUBON	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Resource	K					
	1	1		2		
	2			2		
	3			4		
	4			11		
	5			5		
SCHOOL TOTAL		1	0	24	0	0

(No Talented Services at this site)

SHENANDOAH	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Resource	K			3		
	1	4		5		
	2	8		8		
	3	3		10		
	4	4		6		
	5	4		10		
SCHOOL TOTAL		23	0	42	0	0

(No Talented Services at this site)

WEDGEWOOD	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Resource	K	1		1		
	1			3		
	2			2		
	3	1		7		
	4			8		
	5	2		10		
SCHOOL TOTAL		4	0	31	0	0

(No Talented Services at this site)

WESTMINSTER	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
Self Contained	PK	1		14		
SCHOOL TOTAL		1	0	14	0	0

(No Talented Services at this site)

GLASGOW	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
	6	20	20	15	2	1
	7	22	28	23	12	3
	8	33	25	27	3	1
SCHOOL TOTAL		75	73	65	17	5

WESTDALE	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
	6	22	9	21	3	9
	7	26	12	29	3	11
	8	39	16	37	10	8
SCHOOL TOTAL		87	37	87	16	28

WOODLAWN	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
	6	11	3	9	1	4
	7	2	0	8	0	1
	8	3	0	6	0	2
SCHOOL TOTAL		16	3	23	1	7

MCKINLEY HIGH	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
	9	36	7	32	10	13
	10	28	30	36	18	9
	11	35	19	39	13	14
	12	34	21	28	12	11
SCHOOL TOTAL		133	77	135	53	47

BRCVPA	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
	K					0
	1					2
	2					3
	3					6
	4					7
	5					21
SCHOOL TOTAL		0	0	0	0	39

(No Gifted Services at this site. Some students counted as Talented only are identified as Gifted, but are not receiving services.)

FOREST HEIGHTS	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
	K					0
	1					0
	2					1
	3					2
	4					1
	5					4
SCHOOL TOTAL		0	0	0	0	8

(No Gifted Services at this site. Some students counted as Talented only are identified as Gifted, but are not receiving services.)

MCKINLEY MIDDLE	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
	6					13
	7					13
	8					12
SCHOOL TOTAL		0	0	0	0	38

(No Gifted Services at this site. Some students counted as Talented only are identified as Gifted, but are not receiving services.)

BATON ROUGE HIGH	GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY
	9					46
	10					54
	11					43
	12					48
SCHOOL TOTAL		0	0	0	0	191

(No Gifted Services at this site. Some students counted as Talented only are identified as Gifted, but are not receiving services.)

**Appendix 5: List of Data Requests by BRAGTS Task Force
Made 12 Nov 2007 of EBRPSS Staff**

- 1) What are the current numbers at each G/T site by need (Self-contained, Resourced, Talented, Dual Exceptionality) by grade level, by status ==> Identified gifted vs. Scholastic Academy? (This request expands the tables we already have with the addition of being delineated by grade level.)
- 2) What is the demographic base (=numbers and geographic area drawn from) for identified gifted students in our district, delineated by identified self-contained and resourced? Same for Scholastic Academy.
- 3) How many 5th graders from current gifted sites are projected to enroll in the 3 gifted middle schools? (This information would be different than a straight count given in item 1.)
- 4) What is the projection for enrollment in the McKinley HS Gifted Program especially in view of the state-mandated SA decline over the next two years?
- 5) What would be the impact of establishing a Gifted Program at Woodlawn High in terms of MHS numbers (again this issue is based on demographics)?
- 6) What is the projected impact on teacher staffing by site based on items 1-5, and what is the projected G/T staff turnover (retirement, resignations, and transfers)?
- 7) What is the projected number of SA students expected to become identified as gifted during this time interval at the self-contained sites?
- 8) What is the projected number of 8th grade students in the dedicated magnet middle schools expected to enroll at BRMHS?
- 9) What is the projected number of private and parochial school students that would be drawn back into the EBRPSS with the establishment of dedicated gifted sites? (Related to item 10.)
- 10) How many G/T students are currently refusing services in the system, and where are they located (also related to item 9)?
- 11) How many certified gifted teachers are currently teaching in classrooms other than gifted classrooms in the EBRPSS?
- 12) When identified G/T students decline services, what are the primary reasons given (reason and proportion in each category)? (Information from Service Refusal form)

Appendix 6: Outreach Interview Summary Report

A summary of the efforts to date of the BRAGTS Outreach subcommittee follows. This information is preliminary and the work will continue.

Subcommittee on Outreach Status:

To date, we have received feedback from interviews at five of eighteen sites that provide gifted and/or talented services. Several additional sites have been contacted, but feedback is not available at this time. The information provided is intentionally general at times to provide anonymity to the school system employees. This report will focus on areas of consensus from the interviews as with the limited response to date, it is difficult to determine the extent of differing views but areas of consensus will be significant regardless of additional feedback in the future.

Gifted/Talented at Particular Schools

There is consensus among respondents that a major strength of the G/T program is the presence of dedicated, experienced, qualified educators. There is concern as to the future of the Scholastic Academy (SA) program and the future of the SA students due to recent changes in the state policy for Scholastic Academy programs. Common needs include physical issues – class space, facilities, condition of buildings and instructional issues – expanded program and curriculum options, staff development and training opportunities.

Gifted/Talented Specifics

Gifted/Talented (G/T) students are viewed as having identifiable characteristics and needs that differ from traditional and magnet student populations. While there is overlap and there are always exceptions, it is thought that the needs of gifted and talented students can not be met by standard traditional or magnet programs – including AP and honors classes. G/T students need to be challenged with greater depth of subjects. Grade-skipping is not an answer to meeting the needs of a G/T student. Ability grouping in the form of self-contained classes is a significant advantage in G/T education. The needs of some students can be met with resource programs depending on individual situations and needs. Resource programs are also an easy way to introduce and build a G/T student population at a site or to serve sites with small G/T populations.

Status and Future of Gifted/Talented

As positive and strong as the G/T Program is believed to be, there is concern as to declining numbers in the program. This concern is exacerbated by the changes in the Scholastic Academy Program. The most important issues identified as key to sustaining and growing the G/T Program are the needs for significant efforts to be placed on identification of GT students (there are significant indicators that many students are not identified) and education of the public as to what and where the G/T programs are. It is a common experience that parents are found not to be aware that the G/T Program exists or what it offers or how it differs from other programs in the schools. In order to sustain and grow the G/T Program there is also consensus that the curriculum and course options need to be regularly updated.

Status/Role of BRAGTS

Educators interviewed encouraged BRAGTS to be involved in educating the public as to the existence and benefits of the G/T programs at all sites and to serve as a conduit for not only public forums but also “word-of-mouth” efforts to encourage the public to visit G/T sites and evaluate the G/T Program as an option for the education of their children.

Appendix 7: Outreach Interview Instrument

Principal / Coordinator Interview Questions

Introductions: Introduce yourselves, identify yourselves as working with BRAGTS to learn and better understand the issues and needs of the Gifted/Talented system and the EBRPSS in general. We will use their input to develop our future plans and activities. Let the Principal/Coordinator know that their responses will not be identified to any official of the EBRPSS without their express consent.

Background:

School:

Grades Served and approximate number of G/T students:

What is the background and experience of the person in education, Gifted/Talented, and EBRPSS?

Gifted/Talented at This Particular School:

What is working well?

What is not working as well as you would prefer?

What are the needs of your facility (staffing, facilities, etc.)?

Gifted/Talented Specifics:

What is the difference between a magnet student and a gifted student? Do you think the needs of a gifted child can be met by the magnet program? If so, how?

What do you see as essential academic services for our gifted students? (Curriculum compacting and differentiated instruction)

What is your opinion regarding grade skipping?

What is your opinion regarding ability grouping?

What is your opinion regarding Resource and Self-Contained Gifted/Talented instruction?

Status and Future of G/T:

What is your opinion regarding the current status of the EBR G/T Program?

What is your opinion regarding the future of the EBR G/T Program?

Appendix 7 (continued)

What is your opinion regarding how to grow the G/T Program?

What is your opinion regarding the potential number of unidentified G/T students?

What is your opinion regarding Dedicated G/T sites?

What options other than dedicated G/T sites would help to grow the program?

What is the Worst thing that could be done to the G/T program to assure its demise?

Status/Role of BRAGTS:

What is needed/wanted by you from BRAGTS?

What is NOT needed/wanted by you from BRAGTS?

What should be the BRAGTS role with the EBRPSS G/T Program going forward?

What can BRAGTS do to help both the students at your school and the students in the EBRPSS in general?

BRAGTS conducted a survey of G/T parents in 2006. We will repeat this survey. Are there any questions you would like to see asked?

Conclusion:

Your time and consideration are greatly appreciated.



Gifted & Talented

Appendix 8: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQ) Section

What is the difference between Gifted, Talented, and Magnet Programs?

“Gifted,” in the simplest terms, refers to high IQ (approx top 5%), but it also identifies students who have an above-average capacity for learning. Gifted students not only have very high IQs, but they tend to be curious, deep thinkers who are able to grasp complicated concepts and ideas quickly and easily. EBRPSS uses a combination of testing metrics to determine if a child qualifies for gifted services.

“Talented” refers to an exceptional ability in visual art, drama, or music; this is also determined by EBRPSS using testing metrics. A student may be gifted or talented, or both gifted and talented.

The Gifted Program serves the special needs of gifted students via individualized education plans (IEPs) and opportunities for acceleration and enrichment to keep them challenged. Teachers in the EBRPSS Gifted Program are among the most highly qualified and certified in gifted education in the country. The special needs of a gifted student require that they not simply be “accelerated.” The gifted curriculum is not a matter of learning a traditional curriculum faster. It is a curriculum developed to accommodate the incredible capacity for learning and the desire to know more that most gifted students have. When parents opt for private and magnet schools for their gifted children, these students often merely coast along without being challenged, and occasionally develop boredom-induced behavior problems.

In its current state, Baton Rouge’s Gifted Program is still excellent. Glasgow Middle School (approx 50% gifted) was recently awarded Blue Ribbon School status by the U.S. Department of Education (the only middle school in Louisiana to receive this award this year), and selected as one of eight schools in the country to be featured on the USDOE website. In 2006, the gifted students at McKinley High School had the highest ACT scores of all 4-year high schools in the state. Students in the Gifted Program achieve not only at state and regional levels, but have also received recognition on a national level.

Magnet programs generally have a particular art, technology, or academic focus, but entrance requirements are not as rigorous as those for Gifted programs. Typically, at the middle and high school levels, students are required to maintain at least a 2.5 GPA. Baton Rouge has some high performing magnet schools that often show excellent test scores. EBRPSS has moved toward “dedicated” magnet schools, whereby the entire school participates in the Magnet Program. The dedicated site concept has worked very well for the Magnet Program.

What is the Scholastic Academy Program and what changed in July 2007?

In the late 1990's, EBRPSS implemented the Scholastic Academy (SA) Program to make the Gifted Program more accessible to minority students who might not initially qualify as gifted due to socio-economic disadvantages or because they were too young to be identified accurately. This allowed high-performing non- or pre-identified gifted students to take part in the gifted classrooms for a probationary period of 2 years maximum. However, this has not been strictly enforced, and many SA students have continued, unidentified, in the Gifted Program beyond the two-year probationary period.

Effective July 2007, the state Department of Education (DOE) is requiring EBRPSS to enforce the 2-year limit on students coming into the SA Program after July 2007. No new in-district SA students will be allowed for grades 7 thru 12. While BRAGTS takes no position on this decision, we recognize that this will cause a further decline in gifted enrollment.

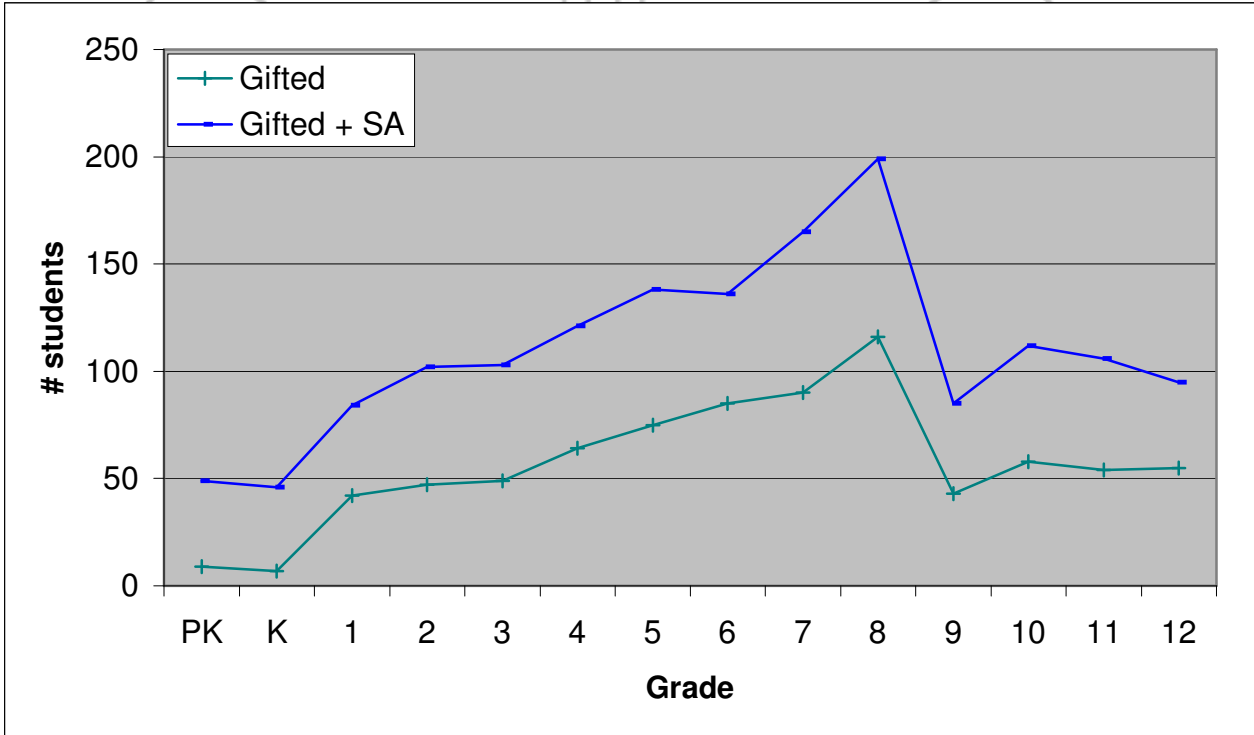
How many students are currently enrolled in the Gifted and Talented Program?

See below for enrollment data as of November 28, 2007, in tabular and chart form.

GRADE	GIFTED ONLY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY ONLY	SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY AND TALENTED	TALENTED ONLY	TOTAL GIFTED	TOTAL GIFTED + SA
PK	9	0	40	0	0	9	49
K	7	0	39	0	0	7	46
1	42	0	42	0	2	42	84
2	45	2	54	1	4	47	102
3	42	7	51	3	10	49	103
4	47	17	56	1	10	64	121
5	55	20	61	2	37	75	138
6	53	32	45	6	27	85	136
7	50	40	60	15	28	90	165
8	75	41	70	13	23	116	199
9	36	7	32	10	59	43	85
10	28	30	36	18	63	58	112
11	35	19	39	13	57	54	106
12	34	21	28	12	59	55	95
Total	558	236	653	94	379	794	1541

Are there enough gifted students to fill up the new sites being proposed?

There are currently approximately 60,000¹ school-age children in EBR parish. The National Association of Gifted Children estimates that 4-6% of students are gifted, which suggests a gifted population of 2400-3600 in EBR parish. At its peak, around 1990, enrollment in the G/T Program was approximately 3000 students. Thus, BRAGTS believes enrollment in the Gifted Program will double from the current figure of 1500 (Gifted/Talented/Scholastic Academy).



¹ Back-calculated from EBRPSS enrollment of 43,400 (from EBRPSS website) and *Advocate* article dated 9/22/07 stating that 72% of school-aged children are enrolled in public school.

What is the difference between “self-contained” and “resource” programs?

A self-contained gifted program means that the student is in a classroom with other gifted students for all academic classes. Most gifted students are not simply “math whizzes” or strong readers, but require an accelerated, enriched curriculum in all academic areas. They are able to grasp complicated ideas and concepts more quickly and easily than traditional students. The gifted student’s capacity for learning and understanding applies to all subjects.

A resource program is one in which the student is “pulled out” of the traditional classroom setting for one or more hours per week of enrichment. They attend a special resource class in which they receive some gifted curriculum and enrichment, but often miss instruction in their regular class that then has to be made up.

Resource can serve as a solution for students who are accelerated in only one subject area. Most gifted children need enrichment in all subject areas in order to reach their full potential and that cannot be accomplished in just one hour a few times a week.

The school system just added gifted sites, why is this not adequate?

Beginning this 2007/2008 school year, EBRPSS added gifted programs at several elementary schools and one middle school in the southeast part of the parish. Only two of these schools currently offer self-contained gifted classes; the others offer resource programs only. Even with the addition of the new sites there has been a significant drop in overall enrollment in the Gifted Program.

I have read that traditional education students benefit academically from going to school with gifted students. Why isolate the gifted students and lose this benefit?

Research on the subject reveals that traditional students benefit only when there is not a large academic gap between the traditional and gifted students. We currently have a system in which gifted populations (>95th percentile) are on campus with students who tend to score much lower on standardized tests (often lower than 50th percentile). This creates a division between students who are high achieving and students who tend to struggle. This separation has been expanded by the removal of the academic “middle class” to dedicated magnet schools. Most research shows that this has a negative effect on both gifted and traditional students, causing behavior issues and academic regression. A better model would combine gifted students with high-achieving traditional education students at the middle and high-school level. Certainly, all students need to be challenged and need to be able to set their sights on the next level. Traditional students would be better served if provided with access to a very attainable “next step up” rather than being combined with students performing at a level that is likely unattainable. It is beyond our scope to suggest specific programs for this purpose, but they are certainly needed.

Is this proposal not just another example of “white flight” from the inner city to the suburbs?

The current GT/SA enrollment has remained steady for the past two years at 45% black and 55% non-black. Some parents rightfully object to a blanket indictment of the inner city schools in which many of the Gifted programs currently reside. BRAGTS believes that perception is often worse than reality at these sites. That is not to say that serious problems do not exist at some of these sites. It has also been rightfully noted that such conditions are unacceptable for all students. The problems at these sites need to be addressed to create a safe, pleasant learning environment for all students. However, having the gifted program at these sites is not doing any particular good for either population (gifted or traditional) and our organization’s primary objective is to meet the needs of G/T students. These needs cannot be met if parents decline gifted services because of unattractive sites.

Is Baton Rouge Magnet High School a gifted school?

Baton Rouge Magnet High School is an academic magnet school. Requirement for entry is a 2.5 GPA. It offers AP and honors courses but has no curricula for the student identified as gifted. Magnet teachers are not required to have any gifted training or certification, and often do not understand the special needs of the gifted child. Students opting to attend Baton Rouge Magnet High School decline and receive no gifted services.

How are LEAP test scores handled?

LEAP test scores are calculated for an entire school. Thus, when gifted and traditional programs are combined in the same school, the scores are averaged together, in some cases bringing up the score of a school that might otherwise be deemed “academically unacceptable” by state standards. The test scores of gifted students can mask failing school scores. This can prevent identification of the true needs of the schools and the timely addressing of those needs.

There is a solution to partially offset this impact on test scores. EBRPSS can request a waiver from BESE (it has been done before in other parishes) to allow gifted students’ test scores to be included in their “home” school test average. This is more equitable than the current method, in which only a few traditional education schools are benefiting from the gifted test scores—instead, they would be spread around to more schools.

The proposal seems to benefit only an elite subpopulation. Why should I support it?

G/T students have special needs and deserve to have their needs addressed just as any other students in EBRPSS. They are no more privileged than any other classification of students but should not be any less privileged.

The Gifted Program has potential to show off Baton Rouge as a leader in gifted education and help to attract and retain parents of gifted children in Baton Rouge. Companies that consider relocating to Louisiana are often put off by the lackluster school system. Having visible, high-performing gifted schools would increase the options for parents of gifted students and increase the attractiveness of EBR for companies considering locating in LA. The long-term and widespread ramifications of having an attractive Gifted Program cannot be denied.

Combining gifted students and teachers into Gifted/Talented and Gifted/Talented/Magnet Academies will allow more efficient use of resources through economies of scale. These students can make the best of the resources they all need. Likewise, students in the traditional schools will have better access to the resources that are at their schools, and make more appropriate use of the funds to suit the needs of their specific student population.

In 1998, shortly before he retired, then Associate Superintendent E. Don Mercer commissioned an outside evaluation of the G/T Program. While the report was generally laudatory of the program as a whole, the main point made was that the G/T Program should “drive” the rest of the system.

There have been many news reports about the “Brain Drain” from Louisiana. How these students are treated for their K-12 experience will have an influence on whether these students desire to remain in Louisiana as they make their life decisions for college education and careers.

Why does BRAGTS think its proposal must be implemented for the 2008/2009 school year?

The number of identified gifted students enrolled in self-contained gifted programs declined from 878 to 753 students between October 2006 and November 2007 (a 14% decrease). Further, 6 out of 8 self-contained sites experienced a double-digit percentage reduction in identified gifted students. For example, Westdale Middle School showed a decline of 31%, and as the DOE restrictions on SA 7th and 8th graders begin, this site will experience even greater losses. In any decaying growth curve, as a lower critical mass threshold is reached, the curve declines increasingly faster; we have obviously crossed this point in this district. BRAGTS believes the enrollment decline must be reversed by next school year to save the self-contained program.

What will happen to the magnet schools if the gifted students leave?

When the gifted students return to the Gifted Program, it will free up slots in magnet schools for students currently on waiting lists for those excellent programs. It is a win-win situation.

Don't gifted students need to be "socialized" and not isolated?

There is no such thing as a "typical" gifted student. They cross all racial and economic boundaries. In a setting with intellectual peers from all backgrounds, gifted students flourish. They are more likely to feel free to explore the cultures, histories, and backgrounds of their peers in a supportive, nondiscriminatory environment. In their current settings, most gifted students feel isolated within the larger population. Gifted students are "bussed in" to schools that "belong" to the traditional population, causing them to feel like visitors in their own schools. The differences between the two populations are so great that there is often a complete disconnect between "them" and "us" from both sides, occasionally resulting in outright hostility or resentment between the groups. No one benefits from such a situation. Gifted students will still be exposed to a huge variety of peers from all races and backgrounds, but on a more equal footing.

Gifted students are further isolated within their own schools by being separated from other gifted students. Having a smaller pool of intellectual peers and little contact with a larger "like" group makes children at smaller gifted sites feel like outsiders who don't get the same access to the resources that students in similar programs receive. Their social options are often extremely limited.

