



Biloxi Upper Elementary School
Military Star School Program Application
2022-2023

About Biloxi Upper:

Biloxi Upper Elementary School serves approximately 830 5th and 6th grade students in Biloxi Public Schools. Our close proximity to Keesler Air Force Base, as well as our position along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, has allowed us the tremendous opportunity to educate the students of military families. We are proud of the relationships we have built with our local military families, and we hope to strengthen that relationship by being named a Military Star School.

Biloxi Upper works closely with our Military School Liason to coordinate school tours for incoming military families and to ensure a smooth transition for our military families and students. We also have an on-sight MFLAC representative who hosts regular school-based events for our military students, such as “Lunch Bunch,” Month of the Military Child, and Veterans’ Day programs.

In addition to the above, Biloxi Upper offers numerous opportunities for students to broaden their educational experience. Currently, we offer beginner band classes for our 6th grade students, as well as classes where students begin to learn how to play stringed instruments such as violin and cello.

We are fortunate that in Biloxi Public Schools our students have regular access to technology. Each student is provided a school-issued laptop on which they can access Google Classroom, Google Docs, and a host of other technology programs to aid them in their education.

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- School Website–<https://www.biloxischools.net/biloxiupper>

Please see our information for Military Families under the Students and Parents tab on our website.

Academic Planning for Military Families:

Biloxi Upper Elementary School is an A-Rated school by the Mississippi Department of Education. Our teaching staff of highly-qualified teachers provides instruction in the core academic subjects–English, math, social studies, and science. Students are placed on a “team” of three teachers. One teacher teaches English Language Arts (ELA); one teacher teaches mathematics; and one teacher teaches science and social studies. The average student-to-teacher ratio at Biloxi Upper is 19:1, and we place a focus on providing hands-on, cooperative learning opportunities for students.

We also broaden students’ educational experience by offering special courses in the arts–general music, show choir, band, strings, and art. Students rotate through these courses weekly. Our aim is to pique students’ interests so when they leave us to start their secondary education journey, they are able to choose courses that suit their artistic and creative interests. In addition to academics, students receive 150 minutes of physical activity a week through physical education classes and recess.

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Resources and Educational Opportunities for Military Students:

Military students have regular access to our MFLAC representative, Mrs. Harmony Raffeo. Mrs. Raffeo works with military students through social skills lessons, and she meets regularly with military students in her “Lunch Bunch” groups. These groups meet weekly, and it is an opportunity for military students to meet one another and find friendship with other military students.



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Military students who transfer mid-year from other schools are allowed to participate in educational opportunities such as music, strings, and/or show choir. Additionally, we accept grades from other educational institutions, allowing students' grades to pick up where they left off in their prior school.

Biloxi Upper Elementary Transition Program:

Our welcoming committee pairs our students with a classmate on the morning of the student's first day of school. The classmate will show the student around the school, discussing routine procedures such as going to the restroom, cafeteria procedures, morning class routines, etc. They will also provide them with a copy of their schedule, bus number, an activity pass, and welcome packet. Through this introduction the student is instantly connected with a peer/buddy they feel they can turn to for assistance, each lunch with, and build a friendship with. After the student becomes better acquainted with Biloxi Upper Elementary they will have the opportunity to join the welcoming committee in hopes of helping other students transition while building a larger friendship base.

Biloxi Upper Elementary Exceptional Student Services:

At Biloxi Upper Elementary, we serve the Exceptional Students who are identified as Intellectually gifted learners. Our teachers are trained on how to identify and refer students who they believe are intellectually gifted and could benefit from our CREATE services. "The identification process consists of a combination of subjective and objective measures to determine eligibility for the gifted program and includes an equitable opportunity for the inclusion of students who are culturally diverse, underachieving, disabled under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guidelines, physically handicapped, or ADD/ADHD. Throughout the identification process, district personnel select measures that target the student's strengths. All data collected as part of the identification process is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Access to this Information is restricted to the personnel working directly in the gifted education program or having a documented need for access. Parents have the right to view their children's records at any time."



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In the Biloxi Public School district, CREATE stands for Creative Reasoning, Enrichment and Thinking Experiences. At Biloxi Upper we provide our gifted students with opportunities to grow in the areas of Creativity, Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Success Skills, Affective (Social and Emotional) Skills, and Informational Literacy through hands-on projects, presentations, thinking games, robotics, STEAM, and more. We see the students who qualify for CREATE at least 240 minutes a week if not more. At BUE, students are pulled out of the regular classroom for one set day a week to attend class with the CREATE teachers exploring new ways to conquer problems.

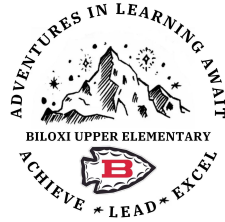
Military students who move mid-year and were served as intellectually gifted in the school they moved from will need to provide documentation of receiving intellectually gifted services. Based on the MDE guidelines, district gifted personnel will determine if further testing is necessary to provide CREATE services.

Upcoming Military Recognition Events:

During the month of April we will celebrate our military children by recognizing the special experiences and challenges they face and the sacrifices they make along with the important role they play within the armed forces community. A bulletin board display will be created near the Lunch Bunch table. Students will wear purple on a designated day in support of our military students.

What Mental Health Challenges Currently Face Military Students? What Resources Are There to Help?

When transitioning to a new school, military children face social and emotional challenges, difficulty understanding policies and adjusting to curriculum and school climate, difficulty qualifying for or continuing with special education services, and elevated stress levels that can result in depression or anxiety. During a time of deployment military students might face heightened levels of stress, emotional disorganization, and detachment or withdrawal from the absence of a family member. Biloxi Upper Elementary has a Military and Family Life Counselor who meets with our



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students to serve in a mental health capacity by doing check-ins and working with students on social emotional skills. Our MFLAC can recommend a wide range of support services available such as FOCUS (Family OverComing Under Stress), Military and Family Life Counseling services are available at installation Military and Family Support Centers, no cost tutoring services through [tutor.com/military](https://www.tutor.com/military), and Mississippi Parent Training Information is available through the Fleet and Family Support Center.

Military School Liaison Contact Information

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