

Education

In June 2011, after a challenging two-year certification process, Biloxi was named an **Excel by 5** community. Through the certification process, all segments of the community – healthcare, education, daycare, recreation, public safety, and the businesses – worked together to develop or enhance local resources to help all Biloxi pre-school children prepare for their first classroom experience. According to the state office, children in communities certified through the Excel by 5 Program will be healthier and better prepared to begin their formal education at age 5. All pre-schoolers in Biloxi are eligible to participate in Excel by 5 activities and to enjoy its family resource center located at Lopez Elementary School.



Biloxi Public Schools

www.biloxischools.net

The **Biloxi Public School District** is among the small percentage of districts statewide to receive the highest academic accreditation by the Mississippi Department of Education. Indicators tied to the No Child Left Behind Act reveal that Biloxi students are performing at “above” or “well above” the national average and scores on the state’s required Subject Area Tests in algebra, biology, English and U.S. History verify that students are passing the standardized tests at a very high rate.

State-of-the-art educational and athletic facilities and extensive extracurricular activities enhance students’ opportunities for a well-rounded educational experience. In addition to traditional college preparatory classes, Biloxi High offers more than 100 courses in business, performing arts, technology and vocational skills. Advanced placement courses also are available to challenge qualifying students.

The Biloxi High Career Tech Center, open to students in grades 10-12, offers programs of study in a wide variety of fields, including culinary arts, drafting, business and computer technology, building trades, child care, and automotive service technology.

Biloxi Public School District Information, 2010-2011

Total number of students	4,913
K-5 student/teacher ratio (average)	19.5 to 1
Secondary student/teacher ratio (approx.)	25 to 1
Average teacher salary	\$48,457
Mean ACT composite score	20.4*
2011 graduates entering college	220

*Statewide mean ACT composite score was 18.7
Source: Biloxi Public School District

Parochial Schools

- **Cedar Lake Christian Academy** offers a K-12 grade curriculum in Biloxi. www.clcalions.com
- **The Catholic Diocese of Biloxi** offers a PK3 – 12 grade curriculum in/near Biloxi at three sites:
 - **Nativity BVM Elementary** in East Biloxi, www.nativitybvm.org
 - **Our Lady of Fatima** in West Biloxi, www.olfbiloxi.org
 - **St. Patrick High School** North of Biloxi, www.stpatrickhighschool.net



Biloxi First, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving Biloxi’s public educational system. Founded in 1989, its goals are to inspire and support creative projects, improve the quality of education, and help to develop the full scholastic potential of Biloxi Public School students. Through more than 50 named

grant programs, Biloxi First has awarded more than \$160,000 in grants, and the program continues to grow through the generosity of local individuals and businesses.



Visit biloxischools.net to sign up for The Windtalker, the Biloxi Public School District’s free on-line newsletter.



In October 2010, the National Catholic High School Honor Roll named St. Patrick as one of the best 50 Catholic secondary schools in the United States. Selection to the honor roll is based on academic excellence, Catholic identity, and civic education.

In March 2011, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College broke ground on construction of a \$9 million Hospitality and Resort Management Center east of DeBuys Road, at its Jefferson Davis campus. It is the largest construction project in the community college's history.



Ranked at No. 86 in 2010, MGCCC was named as one of the country's top 100 community colleges, according to *Community College Week* magazine; MGCCC has been named in the top 100 eight times since 2002. It is the only community college in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Tennessee to make the top 100 list.

Higher Education

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

www.mgccc.edu

The Jefferson Davis Campus of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) gives Biloxi residents the convenience of close-to-home education with an emphasis on quality, variety and affordability. With tuition fees among the lowest in the state, MGCCC is one of the largest community colleges in Mississippi and is one of the top associate degree producers in the nation. It offers academic, vocation-technical and workforce development programs, fine arts activities and an award-winning athletic program.

In addition to being consistently ranked as a top 100 community college in the U.S., MGCCC was ranked in 2010 by *Community College Week* magazine as No. 5 in the number of education major graduates; No. 36 in the number of degrees earned in engineering technologies and engineering-related fields; and No. 45 in the number of degrees awarded to African American students.

Mississippi State University Coastal Research & Extension Center

www.msstate.edu

MSU has a significant presence in Biloxi with its 24,000 square foot Coastal Research and Extension Center (CREC) in North Biloxi. The \$3.75 million complex includes a distance learning center, biological and chemical labs and conference rooms. The Center coordinates the educational programs and research activities of +10 sites in South Mississippi and is structured to provide education and outreach for Mississippi coastal residents regarding almost every aspect of the environment.

Tulane University School of Continuing Studies, Biloxi

www.scs.tulane.edu

Consistently ranked among the top 50 universities in the U.S., Tulane University opened its Biloxi campus in 2002 in Edgewater Mall in West Biloxi.

Emphasizing a flexible approach to higher education designed to meet the needs of working adults, the Biloxi Campus offers courses toward associates' and bachelors' degrees programs as well as subject-specific certificates. A Master of Liberal Arts degree also is offered as well as a Master of Professional Studies degree in Homeland Security Studies.



University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Coast

www.usm.edu

The University of Southern Mississippi offers a variety of two- and four-year degree programs at its main campus in Hattiesburg, approximately 70 miles north of Biloxi; at its 65-acre Gulf Coast Campus in nearby Long Beach; and at five other teachings sites: the Gulf Coast Research Lab in Ocean Springs, the Gulf Coast Student Service Center in Gulfport, at Stennis Space Center, and at two locations in Biloxi – on Keesler Air Force Base and aboard USM's research vessels that dock at the Point Cadet Marina.

In 2007, Cross Creek, located on the I-10 corridor in West Harrison County, was selected as the preferred location for an additional campus of USM. Academic programs will be addressed in the planning process to support university expansion in the areas of tourism, technology, business development and research.

Virginia College

www.vc.edu

Virginia College in Biloxi is a technical college that offers a variety of courses resulting in both diplomas and associate degrees. Programs are offered in office management, the paralegal field, various health and medical services areas including pharmacy technician and therapeutic massage, and an associate degree program in business administration.

William Carey University

www.wmcarey.edu

With its main campus in Hattiesburg, William Carey also offers higher education opportunities to Gulf Coast students at its 30-acre Tradition Campus, located in the planned community just north of Biloxi. Phase I of the new campus opened in 2009, at a cost of approximately \$14 million; additional phases are planned to accommodate up to 3,000 students. Offering bachelors' degrees in a variety of academic fields, William Carey also offers courses toward masters' degrees in business, education, psychology and nursing as well as a specialist degree in elementary education.



USM Research Buoy

Field-oriented classes offered through USM's Gulf Coast Research Lab maximize academic research opportunities in the Gulf and on the barrier islands, thanks to oceanographic and fisheries research vessels, such as the 97-foot Tommy Munro, which operates out of Biloxi's Point Cadet Marina.



Workforce Education in the Biloxi Area

Mississippi offers a comprehensive **Workforce Education Program**, at little or no cost, through the state's community college system. Designed to guarantee a new or expanding company has the workers it needs to succeed, the program includes customer-designed pre-employment training, post-employment training and upgrade/retraining services.

A program that can be leveraged with the Workforce Education Program is the federal government's **Workforce Investment Act**. Through WIA's on-the-job training program, an employer may be reimbursed up to 50% of new workers' wages for up to six months. When participants complete the training, the employer may realize additional savings through a tax credit under the **Targeted Job Tax Credit Program**. For more information, visit the **Workforce Investment Network (WIN)** office located at 2306 Pass Road in Biloxi or call (228) 388-7997.