

# Thought Leaders

by Maryland Mensa

Maryland Mensa developed the Thought Leaders program to help gifted youth challenge and hone their intellectual potential. Participating youth will select a local, regional, national, or international public policy issue of interest, and then conduct structured analysis of that issue using The Eightfold Path approach developed by Eugene Bardach in *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*.

**STEP 1 – REQUIRED READING.** Participating youth will be required to read *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Participating youth can borrow a copy, if needed.

**STEP 2 – PICK A TOPIC.** Participating youth will pick the topic that will be the subject of their policy analysis project. Parents must approve of the topic.

**STEP 3 – CONDUCT ANALYSIS.** Participating youth will analyze their issue, present their findings to an advocacy organization relevant to their topic, and revise their findings based upon any feedback.

## *The Eightfold Path*

1. Define the Problem
2. Assemble Some Evidence
3. Construct the Alternatives
4. Select the Criteria
5. Project the Outcomes
6. Confront the Trade-offs
7. Decide
8. Tell Your Story

Program graduates will receive a certificate commemorating their participation and an invitation to present their findings at a Maryland Mensa Monthly Meeting. The completed analysis will also meet the Maryland Mensa Intellectual Leadership Program Leadership/Public Policy requirement.

For more information, please contact Kristine Poptanich, Maryland Mensa's Gifted Youth Coordinator, at Kristine dot Poptanich at gmail dot com, and check out Maryland Mensa's gifted youth program website for information on other programs available to gifted youth: <http://www.maryland.us.mensa.org/gifted.php>.