

## **Magnet Academies *Frequently Asked Questions*** **School Year 2011-12 (for Application 2012-13)**

### **1. When will applications be available?**

**Beginning at 8:00 a.m. on November 1, 2011**, applications may be downloaded from the Magnet Academies web site, [www.gcsmagnetacademies.org](http://www.gcsmagnetacademies.org). Hard copies will be available at each magnet academy and the district's Service Center at the Central Office. After November 1, parents may also go to any magnet academy for help in completing the application.

### **2. Are applications accepted "first come, first served"?**

**Applications are not accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.** However, students who qualify in the first round are offered slots before anyone who qualifies in the second round - no matter the score.

### **3. What is the lottery system and how does it work? Is it used at all grade levels and in all magnet academies?**

a. It is common for two or more qualifying students to have the same numerical score. The lottery is used to determine the order in which students with the same scores are assigned slots. Beginning with those students with the highest score and decreasing to students with the minimum qualifying score, students are accepted into the school's magnet program until all allocations are filled.

b. When two or more students have the same numerical score, their names will be randomly selected by the computerized application system to determine who will be accepted first, second, etc. before moving to the next highest score on the list.

### **4. How does the wait list system work?**

a. When necessary a wait list is maintained from the first round of admissions until the beginning of the new school year. Students who are on the current wait list are not carried over and must reapply for the next year.

b. No students will be offered slots during the first ten (10) days of any given school year.

c. Students on the wait list are not invited to spring orientation meetings. They should complete the registration process and attend the scheduled orientation meetings at their home-based schools. There are no guarantees that a student on the wait list will be offered a slot for the next school year. If a student is offered a place at a magnet academy after an orientation meeting has already taken place, then the school will ensure that the student and parents receive the information that was shared at the spring orientation meeting.

**5. What is the significance of first round in the application process?**

- a) **It is very important to apply in the first round! Based on the results from the first round, many eligible students are placed directly on the magnet school waitlists.** It is recommended that completed applications be submitted prior to the Thanksgiving holidays.
  
- b) All qualifiers from first round are offered slots before any student from second round can be taken. For some magnet academies, it may be unlikely that a late qualifier (second round and on) will be admitted into the magnet program, especially if a wait list is already in place.

**6. To facilitate the application process, parents/students should direct their attention to the following information at the time they complete the application:**

- a) If you applying from out of district, a charter school, private school, or are home-schooled it is important to assure the supporting documentation, as noted on the front of the application, is submitted with the application. In addition, it is vital that you contact the coordinator of the school to which you are applying, at the beginning of the application window, to assure you will be providing all necessary information in the appropriate formats.
  
- b) Student Statement: Write the student statement directly on the application. The student statement must be limited to approximately 3-4 sentences. No additional pages or attachments will be accepted.
  - Students applying for rising grades 6 - 12 must write their own student statements. Rising grades 6 -12 applicants who submit a statement written by someone who is not the student will earn **0** points for this criterion.
  - Parents of students in rising grades kindergarten through grade 5 should write the statement on the student's behalf.

**7. What are the maximum and minimum scores required for qualification into a magnet program?**

<u>Program Level</u>	<u>Maximum Score</u>	<u>Minimum Qualifying Score</u>
Elementary	22	16
Middle	22	16
High	25	20

**8. How many students are accepted each year?**

The number of magnet students a magnet academy can accept is determined by district enrollment projections. Therefore, students who apply and qualify during the first round have a greater chance of being offered a slot than those who qualify in later rounds.

**9. What is the policy regarding the acceptance of new students whose siblings are already in the magnet academy? Does this policy apply to all magnet academies and programs?**

Siblings of magnet students who will return the following school year are given priority in acceptance only in Round 1. Therefore it is very important that siblings of magnet students submit applications by the Round 1 deadline. They must complete the application and earn the minimum qualifying score, depending on program level. Siblings are accepted in the order of their score - beginning with those students with the highest score down to those students with the lowest qualifying score. After all siblings who have qualified are assigned a slot, non siblings will be accepted beginning with the highest score down to the lowest qualifying score until the school's assigned allotment has been filled. Siblings may be placed on the wait list if the number of qualifying siblings exceeds the number of available slots.

**10. If a student submits an application during the first round and is not accepted, when can he or she reapply?**

a. Students who apply and meet the qualifications for admission are placed on the wait list until the start of the next school year. These students do not need to reapply during the time they are on the waitlist. They are eligible to apply for the next school year.

b. Students who fail to qualify for admission during the first through fifth rounds may not reapply for admission in any round. Procedures stipulate that students may apply only one time per school year.

**11. How is the application scored and evaluated?**

There are four criteria – attendance, grades, discipline, and a student statement. A rubric is used to score applications. See questions 12-15 for more information about each criterion.

**12. How is student attendance evaluated and weighted in the scoring process?**

The state standard for acceptable attendance is five or fewer absences per semester (excluding religious holidays and those excused by a physician or by a principal). Any student with five or fewer absences during second semester of school year 2010-2011 earns four points. Any student exceeding that number earns no points.

**13. How are grades weighted in the scoring process?**

a. The traditional 4-point scale is used for determining the grade average in the magnet application process. Second semester grades from school year 2010-2011 will be used in scoring. Applicants for rising kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 will be evaluated with an assessment instead of a report card.

b. At the elementary and middle school levels a student may earn up to 8 points for grades. At the high school level students may earn up to 12 points for grades.

**14. How is discipline weighted in the scoring process?**

- a. The discipline record counts as 5 possible points in the scoring process.
- b. The discipline report from second semester of school year 2010-2011 will be used for scoring the application.

**15 . What is the significance of the student statement in the scoring process?**

- a. At the elementary and middle school level, the student statement accounts for five points in the application’s overall score. At the high school level, the student statement accounts for four points in the overall score.
- b. Each of the magnet academies has a specific academic focus. ***It is important that the student convey knowledge of the magnet focus, his/her reasons for choosing the particular academy and its specific academic program(s).*** All statements must be written directly on the application. No attachments will be accepted.
- c. Students in rising grades 6 -12 are to write a clear, well-written statement. ***Rising grades 6-12 applicants who submit a statement written by someone who is not the student will earn 0 points for this criterion.***
- d. Parents of applicants for rising grades kindergarten through grade 5 are to write a statement on the student’s behalf stating reasons for choosing the particular academy and its specific academic program.

**16. Are applications accepted after the first round deadline?**

- a. The magnet application timeline is divided into periods called rounds. There are a total of five application rounds for each school year. A round ends promptly at noon on the date designated as ending any given round. The next round begins at 12:01 pm.

The chart below shows the application rounds:

Round	Window Opens	Deadline for Parents to Submit Applications <i>(all applications due by 12:00 NOON)</i>	Parent Notification	Deadline for Parent Response
1	Nov. 1, 2011	Dec. 1, 2011	E-mail and phone notification beginning 12/7/11	Dec. 13, 2011
2	Dec., 8, 2011	Jan. 9, 2012	E-mail and phone notification beginning 1/17	Jan. 20, 2012
3	Jan. 14, 2012	Feb. 15, 2012	E-mail and phone notification beginning 2/17	Feb. 24,2012
4	Feb 18, 2012	June 13, 2012	E-mail and phone notification beginning 6/14	June 14, 2012
5	June 15, 2012	July 25, 2012	E-mail and phone notification beginning 7/26	July 26, 2012

**17. When will the student/parents be notified of acceptance decisions?**

a. Parents will receive notification of acceptance decisions via U.S. mail, e-mail or phone. It is important for parents to ensure that the mailing addresses, e-mail addresses and phone numbers on the application are correct. Applications in any round may be accepted, denied, or placed on a wait list.

b. Parents who receive notification that their student is approved for a magnet slot will need to contact the school by the indicated deadline and state their intent to enroll their child at the school the following school year. If a parent does not respond to the invitation to enroll by the deadline, the slot will be offered to the next student on the wait list.

c. Please note that students must accept only one invitation if two or more schools offer slots. The process will NOT allow a student or parent to accept a slot at more than one magnet school. Once a student has accepted a slot at a magnet academy, the system will automatically delete his or her name from all other magnet academy lists.

**18. What happens when an incomplete application is received?**

a. **It is the responsibility of the parent and the student to submit a complete application with all required documents by the stated deadline.**

b. If the deadline passes (window closes) and the application is incomplete, it will be moved to the next round and held until the requested information is received. Once the application is completed, it will be scored and recorded in the current round.

**19. What happens if, after enrolling in a magnet school, I decide to attend another school?**

a. If a student accepts a slot at a private or charter school, parents are expected to notify the magnet school in writing at that time.

b. Once you leave the magnet academy and enroll at the other school, you have surrendered your slot at that magnet academy.

c. Students may apply to a specific magnet academy only once during an application year.

d. Students who participate on any sports teams are advised to contact the school district athletic director, 355-3987 to answer questions related to eligibility prior to enrolling or withdrawing.

## **20. What happens if I change my address?**

- a. Any magnet student that moves must report your change of address immediately to the magnet school attendance office. Bring 2 proofs of your new address.
- b. If you have been attending a school as a magnet student and then move into the magnet academy's attendance area, you are no longer classified as a magnet student but are still eligible to participate in the magnet academic program. Parents must contact the magnet school's attendance office and bring 2 proofs of new address (copy of power or gas bill, etc. with parent name and current address).
- c. If you are a non-magnet student and move away from the attendance area for a particular magnet academy and are no longer a "home base" student, you must apply as a magnet student and be accepted in order to return to the academy for the following school year. No special consideration will be given to these students.

## **21. Once enrolled as a magnet student, do I need to re-apply each year?**

- a. Magnet students who plan to continue at a particular magnet academy do not need to reapply each year. However, every year parents must renew their magnet status by completing a renewal form. The "window" dates by which this form must be completed and returned will be announced to the students. Reminder letters will not be sent home. Individual students will be reminded as the deadline approaches.
- b. Students who fail to renew their magnet slots by the deadline will be re-assigned to their home base schools.

## **22. Is transportation provided for magnet students?**

- a. Greenville County Schools provides school bus transportation for students who apply, indicate a desire for transportation, qualify and are accepted as magnet students to the magnet academies. A detailed Magnet Transportation Form must also be completed at the time of acceptance in order to register for transportation.
- b. New requests and changes during the school year need to be reported to the school's magnet coordinator.
- c. Transportation must be renewed each year on the appropriate magnet transportation form.
- d. The district has eleven locally purchased buses to provide school bus transportation for magnet academies from all sections of the District's 800 square mile boundary. Depending on the location of the student's stop along the bus route, the bus ride may be lengthy.
- e. Bus stops and assignments are made and communicated to parents by a representative of the Transportation Office. For information regarding pickup and drop-off times and routes, please call the Transportation Office at 355-1289.

23. How do I find out my child's home-based (assigned) school according to our address?

Go to the following website, <http://public.greenville.k12.sc.us/>

On the left-hand side of the screen you may search by your address or subdivision.