

**Magnet Academies Frequently Asked Questions
Applications for Admission 2016-17 School Year**

PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION.

1. When will applications be available?

a. Hard copies of the applications will be available at magnet open house events during the month of October and beginning at 8:00 a.m. on November 2, 2015, applications may be downloaded from the Magnet Academies web site, www.gcsmagnetacademies.org. Hard copies may also be obtained at the magnet academies and at the district's Service Center at the Central Office. Beginning November 2, parents may also go to any magnet academy for help in completing the application.

b. Each program level has its own application. Program levels in Greenville County Schools are as follows: Elementary: Kindergarten – Grade 5; Middle: Grades 6 – 8; High: Grades 9 – 12.

c. Complete the application that corresponds to the program level to which the student is applying.

d. It is very important that parents provide correct and current e-mail addresses, phone numbers and mailing addresses on the application and transportation form. Additionally, the magnet academy must have current contact information on file at all times. **Notify the magnet coordinator** anytime there is a change in e-mail address, phone number, and/or mailing address. Incorrect information may cause a delay in processing magnet applications and transportation requests.

2. Are applications accepted “first come, first served”?

a. **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.

b. **Hand-delivered applications will be accepted during school hours only.** Please contact the school if you are unsure of the hours the main office is open.

c. Hand-delivered applications should be given to the school's magnet coordinator or front office staff.

d. Parents who submit applications or documentation by fax are to confirm receipt by contacting the magnet coordinator(s) at the school(s) to which the student is applying.

3. 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. Schools will not accept incomplete applications.**

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 complete, it will be scored and recorded in the current round.

4. 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.

5. 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, magnet school staff will ensure that the student and parents receive the information that was shared at the spring orientation meeting.

d. Parents of students placed on a wait list will be contacted by the school's magnet coordinator if a slot becomes available. For applicants in Rounds 4 and 5 and waitlisted students, note that parents are expected to immediately accept or decline the magnet slot at the time parents are contacted.

e. Waitlisted students who are offered slots after June 30, 2016 and request transportation will be routed beginning September 6, 2016. Transportation information will be communicated to parents by a representative. Parents should plan to transport the student to and from school until contacted by a representative from the Transportation Office.

6. 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.

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.

7. 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 are applying from out of district, a charter school, virtual school, private school, or home-school, it is important to assure that 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 ensure you provide 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 to grades 6 - 12 must submit the statement in their own handwriting.** If the statement is composed and/or written by someone other than the student, the application will earn 0 points for this criterion.
- Parents of students applying to grades kindergarten through grade 5 should write the statement on the student's behalf.

c. All parents (in-district and out-of-district) who submit applications after the 5th round are responsible for providing the supporting documentation listed on page 2 of the application.

8. 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.

9. 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

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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 re-apply 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.

13. 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 14-17 for more information about each criterion.

14. 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 2014-15 earns four points. Any student exceeding that number earns no points.

15. 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 2014-15 will be used in scoring. Students applying to 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.

16. How is discipline weighted in the scoring process?

a. The discipline record counts as 5 possible points in the scoring process. With each infraction, after the first, one point will be deducted per infraction.

b. The discipline report from second semester of school year 2014-15 will be used for scoring the application.

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

a. At the elementary and middle school levels, 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. Middle and high school applicants MUST submit the statement in their own handwriting. No attachments will be accepted.

c. Students applying to grades 6 -12 are to write a clear, well-written statement.

If the statement is written by someone other than the student, the application will earn 0 points for this criterion.

d. Parents of students applying to 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.

18. 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 a.m.

19. When and how will the student/parents be notified of acceptance decisions?

a. **Wait until you have received notification from all magnet academies to which your student has applied before making your decision.** Parents will receive notification of acceptance decisions via e-mail, phone, or U.S. mail. **Parents must ensure that e-mail addresses, phone numbers and mailing addresses 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 for 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.

20. 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. Schools will not accept incomplete applications.**

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.

21. 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 directly notify the magnet coordinator in writing at that time. Similarly, parents of a magnet student who decide to home-school, enroll in a virtual school, or attend a different public school are expected to directly notify the magnet coordinator in writing.
- 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.

22. What happens if I change my address?

- a. Any magnet student who moves must report a change of address immediately to the magnet school coordinator. 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 coordinator and attendance office and bring 2 proofs of new address (copy of power or gas bill, etc. with parent name and current address). If the student wishes to attend the magnet school for the following school year, the student must submit a new magnet application.
- c. **If a non-magnet student moves away from the attendance area for a particular magnet academy and are no longer a "home based" 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 the student in the magnet application/selection process.**

23. 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 re-apply 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-based schools.

24. Is transportation provided for magnet students?

- a. Yes. 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. Transportation is based on the student's home address with bus stops situated at the entrance to

subdivisions and apartment complexes. Buses will only enter these areas when the distance from the student's home to the bus stop is greater than 1 mile.

b. The district has a limited number of locally owned school buses to provide Magnet Academy transportation throughout 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.

c. A centralized transfer point (McAlister Square – University Center on S. Pleasantburg Rd.) is utilized to transfer students from the bus that services their AM bus stop to the bus that will shuttle them to their school. The process is reversed in the PM. Please note that for the safety of the students at the transfer point, parents CANNOT drop off or pick up their students at McAlister Square.

25. Do returning magnet students have to renew their transportation request in order to ride the bus the following year?

Yes, returning students must complete a Magnet Transportation Request Form to receive transportation for the 2016-17 school year.

26. What is the deadline to submit a Magnet Transportation Request Form to the school's magnet coordinator?

a. The deadline is June 30, 2016.

b. Forms received after June 30, 2016 will be routed in the order that they are received by the Transportation Office, beginning on September 6, 2016.

c. After September 6, 2016 and during the school year, it may take up to 5 school days to establish transportation.

d. At the time a new student is accepted, a Magnet Transportation Request Form must be filled out to register for transportation. The parent will also have the option of requesting a Courtesy Stop in lieu of the student's home based bus stop. Information on the locations of the Courtesy Stops will be attached to the Magnet Transportation Request Form.

e. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure the safety of each student to/from the bus stop (or courtesy stop) and while at the bus stop (or courtesy stop).

27. What if I need to make changes to my transportation form?

All changes to any of the information provided on the Magnet Transportation Request Form must be submitted through the magnet coordinator at the individual magnet academy and follow all established deadlines. It is extremely important that the school have current student and parent information on file at all times.

28. To whom should I direct questions about transportation?

Transportation information will be communicated to parents by a representative from the Transportation Office. After you have received the information, specific questions should be directed to the Taylors Bus Center at 355-7330.