

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

Overview

The admissions process shall be designed to identify students with a strong ability, interest, and desire to pursue advanced studies in government and international studies. The process shall seek to include a pool of culturally diverse applicants which reflects the demographic composition of the participating school division gifted programs. Maggie L. Walker Governor's School shall only accept full-time students (registered for a minimum of 7 of 8 academic classes per semester) who have met the regional requirements for admission.

All applicants residing in a participating school district shall meet the application deadline in December of each year to be considered for admission. If a new student moves into a participating school division between the deadline and the beginning of the fall semester, the student shall submit an application and be placed on the waiting list if the student meets the qualifications.

Except in cases where extenuating circumstances exist, applications are accepted only from students during their eighth grade year of school. Extenuating circumstances include:

1. New residents of a participating division who have been enrolled in a similar educational program as determined by the regional planning committee
2. International students (see policy)
3. Foreign exchange students (see policy)
4. Students documented as having severe health issues during the application year
5. Other extenuating circumstances that superintendents feel warrant consideration.

Step 1: Information Forums

Information Forums are held at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School in the fall where prospective students and parents shall meet teachers and students, ask questions, tour the facility, and receive an overview of the program and extracurricular activities offered at Maggie L. Walker.

Step 2: Application Submission

Students who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply:

1. Students shall be enrolled in Algebra I or higher-level mathematics course for high school credit **when they apply** and they shall be required to have successfully completed Algebra I for high school credit prior to enrollment.
2. Students shall have a B average in the core subjects for the 7th grade year (according to the local school division's grading scale). Students who do not have a B average, but would like to be considered as an applicant due to special circumstances, shall provide a letter of explanation according to local school division guidelines.

Applications are available in Mid-October. Public school students who are interested in becoming applicants from their local school division shall request applications from their middle school counseling department. Private and home-schooled student application contact persons vary by locality. Upon receipt of the completed application, the contact person shall forward it to the local division's gifted program administrator.

The following items shall constitute the application for each student:

1. Personal Data: Basic student information shall be provided on the first page of the application.
2. Recommendations: Each student shall solicit two recommendations to support his/her application. One of the recommendations shall be from a middle school social studies or international language teacher. The other recommendation shall be from a middle school teacher or another adult who knows the student's ability and potential for success. Parents and other relatives shall not submit letters of recommendation. Persons completing recommendations shall submit them to the school counselor no later than the deadline in early December.
3. Transcript: The school shall provide a transcript of second semester, seventh grade and the first semester of eighth grade work. Standardized test data shall be included. Evaluation of the transcript shall include the grade point average (GPA) of the core subjects and rigor. Rigor is a comparison of the courses listed on the applicant's transcript with the most challenging courses offered in the local public middle school.
4. Assessment: Each student shall be required to attend a regional testing session. The student shall complete standardized ability and achievement tests, and a written essay based on a topic provided on the test day.
5. The counselor shall forward application packets, which include the student's application and the two recommendations, to the local school district's gifted program administrator. The gifted program administrator shall submit application data (public and private) to the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School Coordinator of Admissions. No additional information from the student or parent shall be added to student applications after it has been submitted.

Step 3: Assessment Sessions

Each student shall be required to attend a regional testing session. Only students with a valid application submitted by the gifted program administrators shall be allowed to participate in testing. The assessments shall include standardized ability and achievement tests, and a writing sample.

Note: In emergency or extenuating circumstances a make-up session is available. Pre-approval is required. Please submit a request to the gifted program administrator in the home school division.

Step 4: Regional Application Evaluation

A regional committee composed of members from each participating school division shall evaluate all applications.

1. The standardized tests shall be evaluated according to a full-scale methodology.

2. The writing sample shall be evaluated by trained personnel and scored on three criteria: composing, written expression, and usage/mechanics.
3. Recommendations, Grades, and Program Rigor shall be scored by experienced and trained teams of evaluators.
4. A profile including assessment results shall be created for each applicant.

| Category | Maximum Points |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Recommendations | 15 |
| Transcripts (Grades and Rigor) | 35 |
| Standardized Tests | 35 |
| Writing Sample | 15 |
| Total Points | 100 |

5. Following a review of the student applications/profiles, the MLWGS Planning Committee shall establish the regional minimum composite score required for admissions eligibility.

Step 5: Selection

Each participating local school division shall receive from the MLWGS Planning Committee a list of students who completed the admissions process sorted by composite score. Each school division shall select students to attend MLWGS based on the regional evaluation of applicants and the number of available slots for the school division. The number of slots for each division is primarily determined by the number of seniors graduating from that division. Each school division shall also set up an alternate list for slots that open after the initial selection. For students with alternate status, each school division reserves the right to review a student’s current transcript before offering admission.

Step 6: Notification

All applicants who complete the admissions process shall receive a letter of decision from their local division superintendent. Letters shall be placed in the mail in mid-March. No information from the evaluation process shall be available before this date. Students offered admission to Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School shall be invited to “shadow” at the school and be given a due date to accept or decline the invitation for admission.

Step 7: New Student Registration

New students shall register for courses at the Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School in late April/early May.

Appeals

Parents/guardians who have initial questions regarding the admissions decision shall contact their local division Gifted Program Administrator. If an understanding cannot be reached, the parents/guardians shall initiate an appeal of the admissions decision by submitting a written request to the Gifted Program Administrator in their local school division within 10 school days from the date on the letter of decision received from the division superintendent. The request of the parents/guardians should include specific

concerns related to the application process that they would like to have considered in the review. The Gifted Program Administrator shall refer the appealed case to the Coordinator of Admissions and the Regional Appeals Committee.

The Regional Appeals Committee shall be composed of at least three Gifted Program Administrators from the participating school divisions not involved in the appeal. The Regional Appeals Committee reviews all pertinent information (submitted by the application deadline) that is used in determining student admission. Appeals shall be heard within 20 school days of the receipt of the written request. The finding of the Regional Appeals Committee shall be submitted to the division superintendent or designee who shall notify the parents/guardians within 10 school days of the final decision.

New Residents Testing

Students who establish residence in a participating school division during the second semester of eighth grade shall apply and be tested during the summer.

Adopted: September 14, 2017

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