

**ADMISSIONS
HANDBOOK
2026**

**Maggie L. Walker
Governor's
School for
Government &
International
Studies**

Richmond, Virginia

MAGGIE L. WALKER GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies (MLWGS) is an innovative public high school offering a comprehensive college preparatory program emphasizing government, international studies, science, mathematics, languages, and fine arts. The school serves students selected based on aptitude and interest in its mission.

Established in 1991, MLWGS is the product of a public/ private partnership to support the needs and interests of the region's gifted high school students. In 1998, the Regional School Board facilitated the renovation of the historic Maggie L. Walker High School building to become the permanent home of MLWGS. Through a coordinated effort, the school's Booster Groups, PTSA, and Foundation continue to partner with the Regional School Board and school leadership to raise parental and corporate support for the school. As a public school, MLWGS is also supported by the Virginia Department of Education.

The *Washington Post*, May 5, 2017, included Maggie Walker Governor's School on their list of *Top-performing Schools with Elite Students*.

Maggie Walker is described by students and alumni as "inclusive," "friendly," "fostering independence," and "surprisingly non-competitive." Students balance academics with a high involvement in an eclectic set of courses, clubs, and a broad participation in successful athletic teams. MLWGS fosters an incredibly tightly knit community of passionate students, dedicated teachers, involved parents, and connected alumni.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DIVISIONS

Students who live in one of the following school divisions are eligible to apply (see detailed enrollment requirements towards the end of this document).

Charles City	Dinwiddie	Henrico	King and Queen	Prince George
Chesterfield	Goochland	Hopewell	Petersburg	Richmond
Colonial Heights	Hanover	New Kent	Powhatan	

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission engages intellectually curious students in an inclusive environment that offers comprehensive, interdisciplinary education enriched by local and global connectedness.

The mission of MLWGS is based on the beliefs that:

- Our success is fueled by the unique geographic footprint of our students who share diverse ideas and perspectives from a wide range of Central Virginia School divisions.
- Gifted students benefit from special academic programs designed to meet their unique educational needs.
- By cultivating a family-like, nurturing community of students, supported by our staff of professional and dedicated teachers, our school is an effective, proven platform for limitless personal and academic development.
- A rigorous, exciting education that is responsive to the emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs of each student prepares them to reach their goals for higher education, define their academic passions, and to cultivate their talents.
- Our school's deep-rooted heritage of liberal arts curricula, infused with an emphasis on government and international studies, inspires our students to embrace the responsibility of citizenship, the value of effective government and the richness of diverse cultures.
- The pursuit of excellence in interdisciplinary, collaborative, and experiential academic studies prepares students to contribute productively to society and to compete successfully in the workplace.
- Because our students have a wide array of curricular and extracurricular interests, including history, sciences, arts, technology, music, literature, mathematics, athletics, and more, we inspire our students to find their own unique paths.

GOALS

- Maggie L. Walker Governor's School will create a welcoming and responsive environment that celebrates and reflects the diversity of the school districts we serve and fosters a sense of belonging for all.
- Maggie L. Walker Governor's School will engage students with innovative curricula and responsive instruction that focuses on student-centered experiential learning. Instruction will be interdisciplinary and enriched by local and global connectedness.
- Maggie L. Walker Governor's School will be a safe school with effective management of resources.

FACULTY and STAFF

The challenging curriculum is shaped by a talented faculty with guidance from the regional Planning Committee. The opportunity to share professional talents with students committed to learning enables the school to attract the best possible faculty and staff.

DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

English: Four units of credit that must include World Literature I & II, and 11th and 12th grade English classes 4 units

Mathematics: Four units of credit through trig/analysis 4 units

Science: Four units of credit that must include biology, chemistry, and physics 4 units

Social Studies: Five units of credit that must include Global Studies I & II, US and VA History, US and VA Government, and one elective 5 units

International Languages: Six units of credit with a minimum of four credits in one language and two credits in another language 6 units

Health and PE: Grades 9 and 10 2 units

Fine Arts: Art, drama, or music 1 unit

Economics and Personal Finance 1 unit

MLWGS 101: Grade 9 1 unit

Community Service: Minimum of 140 hours in 4 years (only 70 hours from one organization to count toward the 140-hour requirement although all hours will be shown on transcript) 1 unit

Senior Seminar/Mentorship: Must be completed post-junior year 1 unit

Elective(s): 1 unit

Minimum total units of credit* 31 units

*Graduation requirements meet and/or exceed requirements for graduation with an advanced studies diploma in Virginia. All students elect to attend MLWGS and are required to maintain a full day schedule of classes (7 of 8 periods minimum) unless a waiver is granted in accordance with policies of the governing board and/or local school boards. When students below the ninth grade successfully complete courses offered for credit in grades nine through twelve, standard and/or verified credit shall accrue toward meeting the units required for graduation in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131.50 of the State Board of Education's regulations. Verified credits are required in accordance with standards of accrediting schools in Virginia as prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. A student who does not satisfy the MLWGS diploma requirements but meets those of the State Board of Education shall not be awarded the Governor's School Seal.

COURSE of STUDY

MLWGS offers courses in all disciplines. While government and international studies is a theme, the school does not attempt to only produce future ambassadors and diplomats. Instead, the program allows a flexible approach for the individual to understand our shrinking world community. In addition to our theme, interest in English, mathematics, science, international languages, the arts, or other academic areas may serve as the focal point for understanding our world utilizing each student's interest.

The curriculum is developed through immersive approaches using the components that include:

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|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Interdisciplinary Learning | • Community Service | • Athletics |
| • International Experiences | • Laboratory and Field Experiences | • Academic Teams |
| • Seminars and Mentorships | • AP and University Courses | • Clubs |
| • Block Scheduling | • Independent Research | • Extracurricular Activities |

The 9th and 10th grade classes utilize regional themes to create connections across the disciplines. The major civilizations of the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, China, Japan, India, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Russia are analyzed. History, geography, politics, economics, religion, art, ethnicity, and current events are incorporated.

SUGGESTED 4-YEAR ACADEMIC PLAN

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
SOCIAL STUDIES	Global Studies I	Global Studies II AP US & VA History AP Economics AP European History	US & VA History AP US & VA History AP Comparative Govt AP Human Geography	US & VA Government AP US & VA Government
ENGLISH	World Literature & Composition I Yearbook	World Literature & Composition II	Contemporary Voices AP English Lang and Comp Creative Writing	Contemporary Voices AP English Lit and Comp Shakespeare Studies
MATH	Geometry Algebra II	Algebra II Pre-Calculus AP Calculus BC	Pre-Calculus AP Calculus AB Linear Alg/Multivariate Calc Discrete Mathematics	Statistics/AP Calculus Math Modeling/Reasoning
SCIENCE	Biology Chemistry Plus Meteorology Astronomy	Chemistry AP Chemistry AP Biology Anatomy&Physiology	Physics/AP Physics I AP Biology Human Genetics AP Environmental Science	AP Chem, AP Physics
INTER-NATIONAL LANGUAGE	French I, II, III, IV, AP, V, Topics German I, II, III, IV, AP, V, Topics Spanish I, II, III, IV, AP, V, Topics Arabic I, II			Russian I, II Italian I, II Latin I, II, III, IV, AP, V Chinese I, II, III, IV, AP, V Japanese I, II American Sign Lang I, II, III
GENERAL REQUIRED COURSES	MLWGS101 Health/PE Community Service	Health/PE Community Service	Community Service	Senior Seminar/Mentorship Community Service
ELECTIVES	Elective courses will be available throughout the four-year program in the areas of art, music, social studies, international languages, mathematics, science and technology.			

EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Mentorship Program field experience is an opportunity for seniors to gain a realistic perspective of a career or profession. Students are expected to acquire and apply knowledge gained through observation and participation in professional settings. Opportunities include studies with legal professionals and government officials; physicians and researchers; engineers, musicians, business/financial professionals, educators, and others.

The Maggie L. Walker Governor's School offers opportunities for international study. Currently some of these experiences include school-sponsored and non-school sponsored study, and student independent study proposals.

COLLEGE HEAD START

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program exposes high school students to college-level work. It gives them the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of a subject on an AP exam, from which colleges may grant credit or placement. During the 2021-2022 school year, MLWGS offered twenty-one advanced placement courses.

Virginia Commonwealth University and MLWGS partner to offer for university course options on the MLWGS campus. Students successfully completing these courses receive from one-half to one full high school credit and from three to seven university credit hours at minimal cost to the student. In 2023-24, MLWGS offered seven dual-enrollment courses.

The Class of 2025

(193 Graduates)

- 2 Presidential Scholar Candidates
- 42 National Merit Commendations
- 8 National Merit Finalists
- The average SAT score - 1356
- Average ACT - 30
- Performed 41,169 hours of community service
- Fall semester 2025 attendance at 69 different colleges with 67 graduates going out-of state, 124 staying in state, one attending college outside of the United States, and two students taking a gap year.
- Scholarship Offers of \$12,570,000

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student Honor Council

Student rights and responsibilities are important facets of the school. A faculty-sponsored student directed judiciary system thus exists to protect the integrity of the learning process while granting students the freedom of a society based on principles of honor.

Student Ambassador

Student ambassadors assist the administration on projects related to such activities as daily operation of the school, school outreach projects, recruitment of new students, hosting school visitors, and new curriculum projects. Student ambassadors, serving as liaisons to the general community, gain a deeper understanding of the MLWGS program and share in the continuous improvement of the school.

Student Leadership

The leadership and direction of MLWGS are shared responsibilities involving students. The student council has an active role in school governance and provides a voice for the student body in operational affairs.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Extensive opportunities for co-curricular involvement are important at MLWGS. MLWGS and the Virginia High School League (VHSL) policies require that students participate at MLWGS, not at home high schools. Regular activity periods allow for growth and understanding in areas of special interest. The following represents a partial listing of co-curricular clubs and teams offered at MLWGS:

American Red Cross	Peer Helpers
Art Club	Poetry Club
Art National Honor Society	Robotics
ASL Club	Science National Honor Society
Asian Club	Spanish Club
Battle of the Brains	Student Pugwash USA
Chess Club	Technology Students Association
Dance Team	Tutoring
Debate Team	Student Council Association
Drama Club	United Brothers and Sisters
English National Honor Society	
Environment Club	
Fellowship of Student Athletes	
Forensics Club	
French Club	
German Club	
History National Honor Society	
Honor Council	
International Lang. National Honor Societies	
Literary Magazine	
Math Club	
Model United Nations	
Mu Alpha Theta	
National Honor Society	

ATHLETICS

MLWGS participates in the VHSL 3B Region. The Virginia High School League policy mandates Governor's School athletes play for MLWGS.

As an extension of the classroom, MLWGS believes that athletic participation adds value to students' learning experiences. MLWGS has one of the Commonwealth's premier athletic programs with 28 Varsity and Junior Varsity teams. Historically the Dragons have won numerous VHSL regional and state championships.

Basketball (girls/boys)

Soccer (girls/boys)

Baseball (boys)

Softball (girls)

Cross country (girls/boys)

Swimming and Diving (girls/boys)

Field Hockey (girls)

Tennis (girls/boys)

Golf (girls/boys)

Volleyball (girls/boys)

Indoor track (girls/boys)

Wrestling (girls/boys)

Outdoor track (girls/boys)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Community Service

A Carnegie credit for community service is required of all graduates of MLWGS. The 140 hours may be accomplished through volunteer projects with approved organizations that serve the general public or a community agency (typically non-profit). A maximum of 50% of the time may be accorded to any one organization. For verification, a letter signed by an appropriate supervisor must be presented to the office detailing the hours, dates, and duties performed.

Homework

Homework contributes to the development of organizational skills, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility. In keeping with this philosophy, MLWGS emphasizes the importance of meaningful homework assignments carefully carried out by the student. The high ability level of students in MLWGS provides opportunities for creative endeavors and applications.

Failure/ Attendance/ Behavior

Students who fail to make satisfactory progress toward graduation, have poor attendance, or who fail to conduct themselves according to the established guidelines, may be dismissed from Maggie L. Walker Governor's School and returned to their home school division.

Support Available

Support services are available for students who have academic difficulty including tutoring with retired teachers in English and math, Honor Society tutors in all areas, pre-scheduled tutoring with teachers before and after school or during lunch, after school testing lab for make-up and assignments, peer mentors/helpers, assistance with research projects, study skill sessions, and meetings with school counselors. Support is available for students with financial need (free lunch, fees, etc.).

Parents Association

The PTSA of MLWGS serves the mission of the school in many ways. Through the formal Parent-Teacher-Student Association, the parents cooperate with the director and staff and are involved in the daily operation in ways designed to improve the learning and teaching opportunities.

Policy for Weather

Any changes which will affect MLWGS students will be announced on WTVR TV Channel 6, WRIC TV Channel 8, WWBT TV Channel 12 and the School Messenger System.

Transportation

Each school division is responsible for transportation and will develop bus routes and schedules, sharing routes with other divisions when feasible. Transportation is the responsibility of the parents/guardians when their school district's public schools are not in session.

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The admissions process seeks to include a diverse pool of applicants who are interested in our mission and who are representative of the gifted populations in our participating school divisions. Local and regional selection committees are provided with a variety of information to identify students who have the potential for success at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School.

Except in cases where extenuating circumstances exist, applications are accepted only from students during their eighth-grade year of school. All applicants residing in a participating school district must 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 may submit an application and be placed on the waiting list if the student meets the qualifications. The selection process is highly competitive. Typically, over 1,200 eighth grade students apply each year for admission. Maggie L. Walker Governor's School will only accept full-time students who have met the regional requirements for admission.

Applicants must be enrolled in Algebra I or higher-level mathematics course when they apply, and they will be required to have successfully completed Algebra I for high school credit prior to enrollment. If offered during the middle school years, it is highly recommended that entering 9th graders have completed the following courses: Honors English, Earth Science, Honors History/ Social Science; One year of an International Language.

Step 1: Information Session at MLWGS

Saturday, October 25 - Interested students and parents are invited to attend an information session at MLWGS.

8:00 AM – Hanover and Richmond residents

10:00 AM – Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Henrico, Hopewell, King & Queen, Petersburg, and Prince George residents

1:00 PM – Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, New Kent and Powhatan residents

Step 2: Application Submission

Students are eligible to apply if they meet the following criteria:

1. Students must be enrolled in Algebra I or higher-level mathematics course for high school credit when they apply.
2. Students must have a B average on 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, must provide an explanation according to the local school division's guidelines.)

Online application portal is open beginning October 1, 2025. **Public school students** who are interested in becoming applicants from their local school division should consult with their middle school counseling department. **Private and Home-schooled applicants** should check with their school division gifted coordinator regarding their division's application process. In addition, Home-schooled students must have their curriculum registered with the local public-school division.

The following items will constitute the application for each student:

Personal Data

Basic student information is requested on the first page of the application.

Recommendations (limited to two recommendations)

Each student will solicit two recommendations to support his/her application. One of the recommendations must be from a seventh or eighth grade English, math, science, social studies, or world language teacher. The second recommendation must be from a teacher or other adult, not a relative, who knows the student's ability and potential for success from middle school. Persons completing recommendations must submit them digitally no later than Monday, December 8, 2025.

Transcript

The school will provide a transcript including second semester of seventh grade and the first semester of eighth grade work. Evaluation of the transcript will include the grade point average (GPA) of the core subjects and program rigor. Program 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.

Evaluation Session

Each student is required to attend a regional evaluation session. The student will complete timed evaluation activities and timed written essays based on topics provided on the evaluation day.

Public school students must submit their application* **no later than Monday, December 1, 2025**. Persons completing recommendations must submit them no later than Monday, December 8, 2025.

**For private and home-schooled students, the process for submitting an application varies by locality though deadlines are the same. Information is available on the MLWGS web site (www.mlwgs.com) or by contacting the local gifted program office as listed later in this handbook.*

No late applications will be accepted! No additional information from the student or parent may be added to the student's application after Monday, December 1, 2025.

Step 3: Evaluation Session

Each student is required to attend a regional evaluation session. Only students with a valid application submitted by the gifted program administrators will be allowed to participate in the evaluation. Students are to only bring pencils for the evaluation. The use of electronic devices (calculators, cell phones, etc.) will not be permitted. In the case of extenuating circumstances, a make-up session is available with prior approval. Please submit a written request to the gifted program administrator in the local public-school division. For emergencies on the day of the evaluation (illness, etc.), contact the division gifted program administrator no later than the Monday after the scheduled evaluation.

Saturday, January 24th

All applicants will be scheduled for a three-hour evaluation session on Saturday, January 24, 2026. Students will receive instructions in early January including room assignments and time.

Time: 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Place: Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
1000 North Lombardy Street Richmond, Virginia 23220

Snow date: Saturday, January 31, 2026

Make-up: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 (by approval only)

Step 4: Regional Application Evaluation

A regional committee composed of members from each participating school division will evaluate all applications. All categories are scored by experienced and trained teams of evaluators. A profile including a composite score from evaluation results will be created for each applicant. Evaluation criteria include:

- Teacher Recommendations
- Transcript (grades and rigor)
- Essay(s)
- Standardized Tests

Divisions may include additional criteria.

Step 5: Selection

Each member of the Planning Committee (p.19) will collaborate with the Superintendent of his/her participating local school division to select students to attend MLWGS. Selection will be based on the regional evaluation of applicants and the number of available slots for the school division. The number of students offered admission by each division is primarily determined by the number of seniors graduating from that division. Each school division will also establish an alternate list for openings that may occur 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 will receive a correspondence of decision from their local division superintendent. Email notification will be sent out on February 27, 2026. (March 4th - Chesterfield and March 6th - Richmond). No information from the evaluation process will be available before this date. Students offered admission to MLWGS will be invited to "shadow" at the school and be given until March 16, 2025 (March 20th for RPS), to accept or decline the invitation.

Step 7: New Student Registration

New students will register at MLWGS for courses on March 25, 2026, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

APPEALS

Parents/guardians who have initial questions regarding the admissions decision should contact their Planning Committee member. The parents/guardians may initiate appeal of the admissions decision by submitting a written request of appeal to the Planning Committee member in their local school division. The request should include specific concerns related to the application process that the parents/guardians would like to have considered in the review. This request must be received no later than Monday, March 16, 2026. (The deadline for appeals for Henrico is March 10, 2026.) The Planning Committee member will refer the appealed case to the Coordinator of Admissions and the Regional Appeals Committee.

The Regional Appeals Committee is composed of at least three members from the participating school divisions not involved in the appeal. This committee reviews all relevant information (submitted by the application deadline) that is used in determining student admission. Appeals are heard within 30 school days of the receipt of the written request. The finding of the Regional Appeals Committee will be submitted to the division superintendent or designee who will notify the parents/guardians within 10 school days of the final decision.

If the finding of the Regional Appeals Committee results in a change to the applicant's score, the participating local school division may use the new score to adjust the position of the applicant on the waiting list in accordance with the school division's wait list procedures. However, an applicant's score following a review by the Regional Appeals Committee shall not be used to displace or rescind an offer of admission that has been made by the local school division to another student.

NEW RESIDENT TESTING

Students who establish residence in a participating school division during the second semester of eighth grade may apply and be tested during the summer. The application is due prior to testing which will take place at MLWGS on July 8, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

The parent/guardian of a student must have a primary established residence (where the student physically resides) in a participating school division for the student to apply and be granted admission to Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies.

Students will only be accepted through a participating school division and only on a full-time basis. Full-time basis is defined as being registered for at least 7 of 8 possible academic classes per semester. Acceptance of an invitation to enroll in MLWGS is a commitment on the part of the student for a minimum of one year. The student is expected to maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 grade point average and meet the academic standards established by the regional board. The student may remain at MLWGS for the four-year high school program providing:

- the student is in good academic standing and on track to receive the MLWGS advanced studies diploma,
- the student is in good standing in completing community service requirements,
- the student maintains good attendance and behavior,
- the student resides in a participating school division, and
- the school division has funding available.

The school division where the student resides on March 1 will be responsible for tuition for the school year beginning in the fall of the same year. Parents will be responsible for officially notifying, in writing, the school division and MLWGS within ten business days of change of residency.

Failure to notify MLWGS and the school division may result in the loss of enrollment and the loss of tuition payment by the school division.

INFORMATION

If you have any questions about Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies, please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Committee member from the locality in which you reside.

The 2025-2026 Planning Committee members are:

Charles City	Todd Perelli	804-652-4651	tperelli@ccps.net
Chesterfield	George Fohl	804-348-8145	George_Fohl@ccpsnet.net
Colonial Hgts	Joe Douglas	804-524-3405	Joe_Douglas@colonialhts.net
Dinwiddie	Robbie Ganes	804-469-4190	rganes@dcpsnet.org
Goochland	Beth Fowler	804-556-5610	bfowler@glnd.k12.va.us
Hanover	Andrea Herndon	804-365-4554	aherndon@hcps.us
Henrico	Jennifer Conlee	804-226-5126	jhconlee@henrico.k12.va.us
Hopewell	Janice Butterworth	804-541-6400	jbutterworth@hopewell.k12.va.us
King & Queen	Meredith Kesling	804-785-5830	mkesling@kqps.net
New Kent	Ross Miller	804-966-9697	rmiller@nkcps.k12.va.us
Petersburg	Dana Crivaro	804-732-0510	dapeagler@petersburg.k12.va.us
Powhatan	Elizabeth Greenwood	804-605-3151	Elizabeth.Greenwood@powhatan.k12.va.us
Prince George	Melanie Bar. Ficke	804-733-2700	mbarronficke@pgs.k12.va.us
Richmond	Lynn Pleveich	804-495-3371	lpleveic@rvaschools.net



Maggie L. Walker
GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL
for Government & International Studies
1000 North Lombardy Street Richmond, VA 23220
(804) 354-6800
www.mlwgs.com

Non – Discrimination Policy

The MLWGS Regional School Board is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, national origin, or status as a parent. This attitude will prevail in all of its policies concerning staff, students, educational programs and services, and individuals and entities with which the Board does business.