
ADMISSIONS
HANDBOOK
2027
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 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
- Chesterfield
- Colonial Heights
- Dinwiddie
- Goochland
- Hanover
- Henrico
- Hopewell
- King and Queen
- New Kent
- Petersburg
- Powhatan
- Prince George
- Richmond

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 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 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

Subject	Required Credits / Details
English	**4 units** (Must include World Literature I & II, and 11th & 12th grade English classes)
Mathematics	**4 units** (Through trig/analysis)
Science	**4 units** (Must include biology, chemistry, and physics)
Social Studies	**5 units** (Must include Global Studies I & II, US & VA History, US & VA Government, and 1 elective)
International Languages	**6 units** (Minimum of 4 credits in one language and 2 credits in another)
Health & PE	**2 units** (Grades 9 and 10)
Fine Arts	**1 unit** (Art, drama, or music)
Economics & Personal Finance	**1 unit**
MLWGS 101	**1 unit** (Grade 9)
Community Service	**1 unit** (Minimum of 140 hours over 4 years; max 70 hours from one organization counts toward requirement)
Senior Seminar/Mentorship	**1 unit** (Must be completed post-junior year)
Elective(s)	**1 unit**
Minimum Total Credits	**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 components that include:

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

The 9th and 10th grade classes utilize regional themes to create connections across 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

This 4-year academic plan outlines core course progression, language options, required general courses, and elective opportunities across all four high school grade levels.

Subject Area	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
SOCIAL STUDIES	Global Studies I	Global Studies II AP US & VA History	US & VA History AP US & VA History AP Economics AP European History AP Psychology	US & VA Government AP US & VA Government AP Comparative Govt AP Human Geography AP African American Studies
ENGLISH	World Literature & Composition I	World Literature & Composition II	Contemporary Voices AP English Lang and Comp Yearbook Creative Writing	Contemporary Voices AP English Lit and Comp
MATH	Geometry Algebra II	Algebra II Pre-Calculus	Pre-Calculus AP Calculus AB AP Calculus BC	Statistics AP Calculus Math Modeling Math Reasoning Linear Alg Multivariate Calc
SCIENCE	Biology Chemistry Plus Meteorology Astronomy	Chemistry AP Chemistry AP Biology	AP Physics I AP Chem AP Physics 2 Anatomy & Physiology	AP Chem AP Physics C AP Biology AP Environmental Science
INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE	Courses available across grade levels based on proficiency and scheduling: ● **French:** I, II, III, IV, AP, V ● **German:** I, II, III, IV, AP, V ● **Spanish:** I, II, III, IV, AP, V, Topics ● **Russian:** I, II, III ● **Italian:** I, II, III ● **Latin:** I, II, III, IV, AP, V ● **Chinese:** I, II, III, IV, AP, V ● **Japanese:** I, II, III ● **American Sign Language:** I, II, III			
GENERAL REQUIRED COURSES	MLWGS101 Health / PE Community Serv.	Health / PE Community Serv.	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

This 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.

International Study

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

College Head Start

- **Advanced Placement (AP):** The 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 2025-2026 school year, MLWGS offered twenty-six AP courses.
- **Dual Enrollment:** Virginia Commonwealth University and MLWGS partner to offer university course options on the MLWGS campus. Students successfully completing these courses receive from 0.5 to 1.0 high school credit and 3 to 7 university credit hours at minimal cost. In 2025–26, MLWGS offered seven dual-enrollment courses.
- **Intensive:** Intensive courses are faculty-developed, capstone-level experiences that allow students to demonstrate advanced study through rigorous work at or above the Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment level. These courses require exceptional commitment and include a required discipline-appropriate culminating assessment (e.g., research paper, presentation, portfolio, examination, or other capstone project) from which no student may be exempt. The Intensive designation is reserved for upperclassmen and, for multi-year courses, may only be applied during the final year of study.

CLASS OF 2026 AT A GLANCE (186 GRADUATES)

- **3** Presidential Scholar Candidates
- **39** National Merit Commendations
- **17** National Merit Finalists
- **1395** Average SAT Score
- **31** Average ACT Score

- **39,277.75** Total hours of community service performed
- **Matriculation:** Attending 75 different colleges (99 in-state, 82 out-of-state, 4 international, 1 taking a gap year)
- **$15 million+** Total Scholarship Offers

STUDENT AFFAIRS

- **Student Honor Council:** Student rights and responsibilities are important facets of the school. A faculty-sponsored, student-directed judiciary system exists to protect the integrity of the learning process while granting students the freedom of a society based on principles of honor.
- **Student Ambassadors:** Student ambassadors assist the administration on projects related to daily school operations, outreach, recruitment, hosting visitors, and new curriculum projects. Serving as liaisons to the general community, they gain a deeper understanding of the MLWGS program and help drive continuous improvement.
- **Student Leadership:** Leadership and direction at MLWGS are shared responsibilities involving students. The Student Council plays 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 vital at MLWGS. Policies set by MLWGS and the Virginia High School League (VHSL) require that students participate in activities at MLWGS rather than their home high schools. Regular activity periods allow for growth in special interest areas.

Clubs and Teams Include:

- American Red Cross
- Art Club & Art National Honor Society
- ASL Club
- Asian Club
- Battle of the Brains
- Chess Club
- Dance Team
- Debate Team
- Drama Club
- English National Honor Society
- Environment Club
- Fellowship of Student Athletes
- Forensics Club-Speech Team

- French Club
- German Club
- History National Honor Society
- Honor Council
- International Language National Honor Societies
- Literary Magazine
- Math Club
- Model United Nations
- Mu Alpha Theta
- National Honor Society
- Peer Mentors
- Poetry Club
- Robotics
- Science National Honor Society
- Spanish Club
- Student Council Association
- Technology Students Association
- Tutoring

ATHLETICS

MLWGS competes in the VHSL 3B Region. VHSL policy mandates that Governor's School athletes play for MLWGS rather than their home schools.

MLWGS features 28 Varsity and Junior Varsity teams. Historically, the Dragons have won numerous VHSL regional and state championships.

Sports Offered:

- Baseball (Boys)
- Basketball (Girls/Boys)
- Cross Country (Girls/Boys)
- Field Hockey (Girls)
- Golf (Girls/Boys)
- Indoor Track (Girls/Boys)
- Outdoor Track (Girls/Boys)
- Soccer (Girls/Boys)
- Softball (Girls)
- Swimming & Diving (Girls/Boys)
- Tennis (Girls/Boys)
- Volleyball (Girls/Boys)
- Wrestling (Girls/Boys)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

- **Community Service:** A Carnegie credit for community service is required for graduation. The 140 hours must be completed through volunteer projects with approved non-profit or public-serving agencies. A maximum of 50% of hours (70 hours) can come from a single organization.
- **Homework:** MLWGS emphasizes meaningful homework assignments that build organizational skills, self-discipline, and deep application of creative concepts.
- **Failure / Attendance / Behavior:** Students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress, have poor attendance, or violate behavior guidelines may be dismissed from MLWGS and returned to their home school division.
- **Support Available:** Services include tutoring by retired teachers (English/math), Honor Society tutors, teacher office hours, after-school testing labs, peer mentors, study skills workshops, counseling, and financial aid assistance (free lunch, waived fees).
- **Parents Association:** The PTSA actively collaborates with school administration and staff to enhance learning and teaching opportunities daily.
- **Inclement Weather Policy:** Closings/delays are announced on WTVR Channel 6, WRIC Channel 8, WWBT Channel 12, and via the SchoolMessenger system.
- **Transportation:** Provided by participating local school divisions (who create bus routes and share transit where feasible). Parents are responsible for transportation when their local district public schools are not in session.

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The admissions process seeks a diverse pool of applicants representative of the gifted populations in participating school divisions. Except in cases of extenuating circumstances, applications are accepted only during a student's 8th-grade year.

Applicants residing in participating districts must meet the December deadline. Over 1,200 eighth-graders apply annually for a limited number of full-time slots.

Prerequisites

1. Enrolled in Algebra I or higher during 8th grade (must earn high school credit for Algebra I prior to fall enrollment).
2. Recommended middle school courses: Honors English, Earth Science, Honors History/Social Science, and 1 year of an International Language.

Timeline & Steps

Step 1: Information Session at MLWGS - Saturday, October 17, 2026

- **8:00 AM:** Chesterfield & Richmond residents
- **10:00 AM:** Charles City, Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Hanover, Hopewell, King & Queen, New Kent, Petersburg, Powhatan, & Prince George residents
- **1:00 PM:** Henrico residents

Step 2: Application Submission

- **Eligibility:** Must be in Algebra I or higher and hold a 'B' average across 7th-grade core subjects (per local division grading scale)
- **SchoolMint Application Opening:** October 1, 2026
- **Deadline:** Applications due **Friday, December 4, 2026**
- **Components Required:**
    - **Personal Data:** Basic student profile submitted in SchoolMint
    - **Recommendations - 2 are Required:**
        - One from a 7th/8th grade core teacher (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Language);
        - One from another non-relative teacher/adult familiar with middle school achievement
        - All recommendations due in SchoolMint by **December 18, 2026**
    - **Transcript:** Covers 2nd semester 7th grade and 1st semester 8th grade (evaluated for GPA and program rigor)
    - **Evaluation Session:** Assessment and written essays completed on testing day

No late applications or added materials will be accepted after December 4, 2026.

Step 3: Evaluation Session

- **Date:** Saturday, January 23, 2027
- **Time:** 8:00 AM – 11:30 AM **OR** 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM
- **Location:** Maggie L. Walker Governor's School (1000 North Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA 23220)
- **Snow Date:** Saturday, January 30, 2027
- **Make-up Date:** Tuesday, February 2, 2027 (by pre-approval only)
- **What to Bring:** Students bring pencils only. Electronic devices (calculators, cell phones) are prohibited.

Step 4: Regional Application Evaluation

A regional committee evaluates applications across standardized metrics:

- Teacher Recommendations
- Transcript (Grades & Rigor)
- Essay(s)
- Standardized Tests

Step 5: Selection

The Regional Planning Committee selects students based on composite scores and allocated slots (determined primarily by the size of the graduating senior class in each locality). Alternates may be placed on a waitlist.

Step 6: Notification

- **Email Decision Communicated through SchoolMint:** February 26, 2027 *(March 3rd for Chesterfield; March 5th for Richmond)*.
- **Shadowing & Acceptance Window:** Accepted students are invited to shadow and must accept or decline by **March 15, 2027** *(March 11th for Henrico and March 19th for RPS)*.

Step 7: New Student Registration

New student course registration occurs on **April 7, 2027** from **6:00 PM – 8:00 PM** at MLWGS.

APPEALS

Parents/guardians may appeal an admissions decision by submitting a written request to their local Planning Committee member by **Monday, March 15, 2027** *(March 11, 2027 for Henrico)*.

The Regional Appeals Committee (composed of 3+ members from uninvolved divisions) reviews cases within 30 school days. The division superintendent issues the final determination within 10 school days following the committee finding. Adjustments to scores may alter waitlist positions but will not displace an already accepted student.

NEW RESIDENT TESTING

Students who establish residency in a participating division during the second semester of 8th grade may apply and test during the summer. Testing takes place at MLWGS on **July 7, 2027 at 9:00 AM**.

ENROLLMENT & RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Students must physically reside with a parent/guardian in a participating school division to apply and attend. Acceptance requires a full-time commitment (minimum 7 of 8 classes per semester) for at least one school year, maintaining a 2.0 GPA.

Residency Requirements

- **Shared Custody (Public School Applicants):** Students apply through the school division in which they are currently enrolled; that division pays tuition.
- **Shared Custody (Private/Homeschool Applicants):** Families must declare one primary residence at the time of application to determine division assignment and tuition responsibility.
- **Residency Changes:** Families must notify MLWGS and the local gifted coordinator in writing within ten (10) business days of any change in primary residence. The division of residence on **March 1st** is responsible for tuition for the following school year. Failure to notify may result in loss of enrollment and tuition coverage.

INFORMATION

If you have any questions about Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies, please contact the Planning Committee member representing your locality of residence.

School Division	Gifted Coordinator	Phone Number	Email Address
Charles City	Dr. Shonda Harris-Muhammed	804-652-4651	sharris-muhammed@ccps.net
Chesterfield	Dr. George Fohl	804-348-8145	George_Fohl@ccpsnet.net
Colonial Heights	Dr. Joe Douglas	804-524-3405, Ext. 4138	Joe_Douglas@colonialhts.net
Dinwiddie	Robbie Garnes	804-469-4190, Ext. 3265	rgarnes@dcpsnet.org
Goochland	Liz Kingdom	804-556-5610	ekingdom@glnd.k12.va.us
Hanover	Dr. Andrea Herndon	804-365-4554	aherndon@hcps.us
Henrico	Dr. Jessica Harris	804-226-5126	hcpsgifted@henrico.k12.va.us jlharris2@henrico.k12.va.us
Henrico	Catherine Kelly	804-226-5126	hcpsgifted@henrico.k12.va.us cekelly@henrico.k12.va.us
Hopewell	Byron Davis Sharon Scott	804-541-6400 804-541-6400	bdavis@hopewell.k12.va.us shscott@hopewell.k12.va.us
King and Queen	Amanda Clarke	804-316-4294	amanda.clarke@kqps.net
New Kent	Candice Welch	804-557-3165	cwelch@nkcps.k12.va.us
Petersburg	Dana Crivaro	804-732-0510, Ext. 1030	dapeagler@petersburg.k12.va.us
Powhatan	Elizabeth Greenwood	804-362-2500	elizabeth.greenwood@powhatan.k12.va.us
Prince George	Melanie Barron-Ficke	804-733-2700	mbarronficke@pgs.k12.va.us
Richmond	Lynn Pleveich	804-495-3321	lpleveic@rvaschools.net