

General Magnet Questions

For general information please visit our website at www.houstonisd.org/magnet or call the Magnet Department at (713) 556-6947. Find out more about HISD Vanguard (G/T) programs by calling the Advanced Academics Department at (713) 556-6954.

Q: What is a Magnet Program?

A: A Magnet Program offers a specialized focus of study designed to appeal to a wide variety of student interests and needs. Magnet programs do not have an attendance boundary; if you live anywhere within HISD, you may apply to any Magnet program. If you apply to a particular Magnet program, qualify for it, and there is space in it, you will be invited to attend.

Q. I have questions about my magnet status, but HISD offices are closed until Monday. What can I do?

A. Please review your child's magnet status carefully and read through the FAQs to see if your question has been answered. If not, please send an email to magnet@houstonisd.org or call the Magnet office at (713) 556-6947 on Monday during office hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Q: What is the difference between Magnet and Vanguard (G/T)?

A: Vanguard (G/T) program refers to any of the programs in the district designed to serve the needs of gifted and talented (G/T) children. So, when you see the word Vanguard, just think G/T. All schools have a Vanguard (G/T) program. Vanguard Magnets are just one of the subsets of Magnet programs, just like fine arts or STEM. These district-wide programs are designed to serve the needs of identified G/T students. (Students must meet entrance criteria.)

Q: Which program is right for my child and family?

A: Before submitting an application, we recommend that you research the program focus, eligibility requirements, and curriculum. One of the best ways to do this is to visit the schools. While all of our Magnet programs are quality programs, a thorough exploration will enable you to determine the best match for you, your child, and your family.

Q: How may I find out more about the Magnet programs in HISD?

A: Contact the individual schools with questions specific to a particular school or program. For general information please visit our website at www.houstonisd.org/magnet or call the Magnet Department at (713) 556-6947. Find out more about HISD Vanguard (G/T) programs by calling the Advanced Academics Department at (713) 556-6954.

Application Questions

Q: When may I submit an application?

A: Applications will be accepted by all Magnet Programs beginning October 1, 2015. Applications must be completed and received by December 18, 2015 to be considered in the first round of screening. All complete applications received within this window will receive equal consideration, with no advantage being given for those applying earlier during the window.

Q: What is the fastest way to apply?

A: Online. Not only is your application instantly processed, but you can print a copy of your selections for your records.

Q: How do I apply online?

A: Go to www.hisdchoice.com; you may also access the online application through the Magnet Website at www.houstonisd.org/magnet. Follow the instructions on the website to set up your account and complete your applications. You do not need to complete online applications all at one time. You may save incomplete applications for completion at another time. Once the application is completed, you will click on "Submit." After you have submitted the application, no more changes may be made, and you will see a confirmation screen. Print this screen for your records.

Q: I applied online last year or the year before. Should I create a new account?

A: No. It is very important that you use the same account.

Q: What do I do if the information that appears on my child's online application is incorrect?

A: When you enter your child's HISD ID# on the online application, much of the demographic information will be automatically filled in for you. If this information is incorrect, you need to contact your child's current school to have it corrected. If your child is not currently in an HISD school, you will need to contact the last HISD school attended for correction.

Q: How do I submit the required documentation when I apply online?

A: For students who were in HISD for the entire 2014-2015 school year, there will normally be no required documents to submit. However, for students who were not in HISD last year or those missing documents, there are several options this year for submitting documents.

1. **Upload directly** - The quickest option is to upload documents directly from within the online application. You will see a list of documents that need to be uploaded. Each document only needs to be uploaded once, even if it is required for multiple applications for the same student.

2. **Send by U.S. mail to the Office of School Choice** - Send *copies* of documents to Magnet Applications, Office of School Choice, Houston Independent School District, 4400 West 18th Street, Houston, TX 77092. The copies will be kept for our records. In the online application system you will see confirmation, once the documents have been uploaded.

3. **Drop off at the Office of School Choice** - You can leave copies of the required forms at our offices. Once you arrive at the address listed above, please check in at the reception desk by the main entrance to the building.

4. **Deliver to schools** - You may deliver copies to each school to which you are applying.

Q: How do I apply with a paper application?

A: The process for paper applications has changed since last year. We always encourage parents to fill out online applications but if you choose to submit the paper application, you will need to fill out one application that will cover all the schools to which you are applying. You should mail or hand-deliver the applications to the Office of School Choice at HISD's Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center, 4400 West 18th Street, Houston, TX, 77092.

Q: How do I submit the required documentation when I apply with a paper application?

A: When you submit a paper application, if at all possible, you should attach a complete set of all of the required documentation. In any case, documentation should be received by January 31. Your application is not considered complete until all required documentation is received.

Q: The application asks for my child's Student ID#. Where can I find that?

A: The Student ID# is found on your child's report card, progress report, test reports, and on many of the

communications you receive from your child’s school. You can also find it online at HISD Parent Student Connect. If you are unable to find it anywhere else, call or ask at your child’s current school.

Q: To how many Magnet programs may I apply?

A: You may apply to a maximum of 10 Magnet programs, of which a total of five (5) may be Vanguard Magnet Programs.

Q: May I submit my applications online and in hard copy, “just to be sure”?

A: No. We ask that you submit only one type of application. Redundant applications will not increase chances of acceptance but may cause difficulties when the applications are processed.

Q: Do all schools have the same entrance requirements?

A: Different programs may use different data points to evaluate whether a student qualifies for the program. Some individual schools have additional requirements such as auditions and testing. Please visit the individual school websites or contact them for further information.

Q: May I visit campuses I am considering?

A: School Choice Thursdays will be held every Thursday from October 8 through December 3. All campuses will provide school tours. For elementary and K-8 schools, the tours will start at 9:00 AM, for middle and high schools, at 1:00 PM. Many schools schedule additional tours – call or check their websites.

Q: If I live out of the HISD attendance district, may I apply?

A: Yes, you may apply at any time but out of district applications are only considered after the June 1, 2016; however, restrictions may apply. Out of districts applicants are considered if no in-district applicants remain. HISD employees who live outside the HISD attendance district are considered to be in-district residents for the purposes of Magnet.

Q. Is there still time to consider other magnet schools?

A. Yes, applications may be submitted to schools with space available during Phase II (December 19, 2015 – May 31, 2016). Our Spring School Choice Fair is scheduled for April 23, 2016, from 9:00 a.m. – noon, at the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center. The address is 4400 West 18th St., Houston, Texas 77092. Only schools with space will be in attendance.

Selection Process Questions

Q: What changes are there to the magnet application process?

A: The changes relate to two areas: 1) student qualification criteria — also known as “qualifying matrices,” and 2) the application process. The changes are designed to make the system equitable and efficient.

Q. How do changes improve the matrix system?

A: The new system is standardized so that one matrix applies to all non-Vanguard programs, with the exception of secondary performing and visual arts program’s auditions. Vanguard magnet programs may require testing for G/T identification.

Q. What are the changes to the application process and how would they make things better?

A: During the first round of applications, Oct. 1–Dec. 18, 2015, parents were asked to rank their selections in order of preference. Once accepted into a program, all of a student’s lesser-ranked applications, including any other acceptances, would be “dropped” or “released”, so that those spots could be offered to other students.

Q: What if there are more qualified applications than there are spaces at a particular school?

A: Then all qualified applications received by the deadline, December 18, 2015, will be placed in a lottery. All students will then be offered spaces in the order they are picked in the lottery. On March 24, 2016, the lottery results will be made available to parents with some qualified students offered spaces and some placed on a wait list.

Q: Will the chances of my child being accepted into our top choice program be any better?

A: The odds would remain the same, but the duration of the wait-list period may be greatly reduced

Q: If my child is accepted into my third-choice school, but wait-listed on the top two, does that mean I’ll lose his/her spot on those waiting lists?

A: No, wait-list rankings for all higher-priority schools would be maintained. Only schools ranked lower than the highest one in which a student has been accepted would be released.

Q. Can I see changes to the wait list on my online parent dashboard?

A. Yes, you will need to carefully monitor your parent dashboard for any changes.

Q: My child was placed on a wait list. As time goes by, he sometimes moves down the wait list. That doesn't seem fair - it appears someone is skipping up above him.

A: Normally, the only changes in place to a student on the wait list should be moves upward. However, in the case of a student who may have been lower down the list whose brother or sister is accepted, that child will be moved up the wait list, and may skip above your child. (Please see the explanation in the item about sibling priority.)

Q: What is sibling priority?

A: It is HISD policy that children who will have siblings also attending the same Magnet school will enjoy limited priority in the application process for "entry grades". Entry grades are usually defined as the lowest grade-level in each program open to enrollment by all students. For elementary programs this usually mean kindergarten. Pre-K is not a part of the magnet program at most magnet elementary schools. However, Magnet dual language, Magnet language immersion, and Montessori Magnet programs do begin at Pre-K. For middle schools, the entry grade level is 6th grade and 9th grade for high school programs.

Up to 25% of available slots will be awarded first to students who will have a sibling attending the same program. If there are more students with siblings than the 25% of spaces allowed, they will be placed at the top of the wait list in the relative order they were selected in the lottery.

If two siblings apply for an entry grade-level program (but do not have another, attending sibling) they are treated the same as any other applicant. However, if one is offered a place, the other is moved up the wait list, and placed among the other siblings.

Q: What is the multiple birth option?

A: Parents of qualifying twins, triplets, etc. applying for these children to attend the same Magnet program, may select to have these children treated as all other siblings (the default) or they may opt to have all the children receive the same lottery position, meaning that all children end up in the same situation, all offered a seat or all placed on the wait list. If they are on a wait list, they will not be offered seats until there is room for all of them.

Q: What if my child qualifies as G/T, but I decide not to attend the Vanguard (G/T) Magnet program. Does he lose the G/T identification?

A: Once a student has been identified as G/T by HISD, he/she is eligible for Vanguard (G/T) services at any school in which he/she eventually enrolls, including his/her zoned school and other types of Magnet programs.

Q. My child has been offered a seat in a Vanguard magnet program. Does this mean that he or she has been identified as G/T?

A. Any student that has been offered a seat at a Vanguard magnet school has been identified as gifted and talented.

Q. In my letter I see a “not qualified” status beside a Vanguard magnet school? What does that mean?

A. The “not qualified” status means that the student did not meet the Vanguard qualification requirements in order to be identified as gifted and talented.

Q. Are there any special considerations/differences in the process if the child is applying for Pre-K? (for example, does that magnet status only apply for one year)

A. There is no difference in the process for applications submitted to our magnet programs that begin at Pre-K. Those programs include the Arabic Immersion School, Mandarin Chinese Immersion School, Garden Oaks Montessori, Wilson Montessori, Blackshear Montessori, Wharton Dual Language, and Helms Dual Language. Currently enrolled Pre-K students do not need to reapply for kindergarten at these programs.

Q: How may I ensure that the application process goes smoothly?

A: In order to facilitate communications with the school(s) to which you apply, please make sure that all information you provide on the application is the same as what is on file at your child’s current school. All contact information such as phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail must be current. Your child’s name on the application form should match the name on the child’s birth certificate. It is important that you check for e-mails sent by the application system.

Q: When and how will I know if my child was accepted by a school?

A: Letters stating the status of your child’s application will be mailed on March 24, 2016 or made available in your online parent dashboard on or after 4 p.m. March 24, 2016.

Q. I got into a magnet school on my list, and I would like to accept the seat. What should I do next?

A. Accept the offered seat either online (for parents that submitted an online application) or in person.

Deliver, in person, the documents listed below and sign the entrance agreement.

Complete the campus enrollment process.

For offers received before April 6, 2016, you will have until April 8, 2016 to deliver the following documents in person:

- Proof of current residence
- Proof of age(if your child is entering Pre-K or kindergarten)

The school will be able to provide a copy of an entrance agreement that you will be required to sign.

Failure to meet the deadline can result in the loss of the offer.

For offers on or after April 6, 2016, parents will have 3 school days to deliver the required documents to secure the seat.

Q. I got into my second or third choice. What happens to my lower-ranked choices?

A. Schools ranked lower than the highest one in which a student has been accepted would be released and no longer available to your student.

Q: What if my child is not accepted into a magnet program I want him or her to attend?

A: Even if some Magnet programs fill up completely, there are usually similar programs at other schools which will still have room. Additionally, many non-Magnet programs provide quality opportunities for students. You may meet with the school's Magnet coordinator or administrator to discuss the decision. If you have specific concerns about the way your child's application was handled or you feel that procedures were not followed, you may file an appeal with the Office of School Choice by e-mailing OSC@houstonisd.org and detailing your concerns.

Q. I believe there is a mistake on my magnet results. Who can I talk to?

A. Please contact the Magnet coordinator at school for more details or contact the Magnet office at magnet@houstonisd.org or call the Magnet office at (713) 556-6947.

Q: What if I have accepted one school, but another school calls me from the wait list. May I accept this second school?

A: Yes, you will have three school days from the date of the offered seat in which to bring to the school whose offer you want to accept:

- Proof of current residence,
- Proof of age(if your child is entering Pre-K or kindergarten)
- The school will be able to provide you a copy of an entrance agreement that you will be required to sign.
- Complete the campus enrollment process.

Q. May I visit a school again before I make a final decision?

A. We recommend that you contact the school's Magnet coordinator to see what times are available. If you have been offered a seat at this school, please remember that there is a deadline to meet to secure the seat.

Q. I am on the waitlist for all magnet school on my list. What should I next?

A. You may also consider schools with space available that are posted on our website.

Q. What if I get into a school I ranked first in my list, but I am interested in a school that I ranked lower? Can I get on the waiting list of a school I originally ranked lower?

A. If there is space available at the lower ranked school. You cannot hold two seats at the same time and would need to decline the higher ranked choice in order to accept the lower ranked school. You will have 3 school days from the date of the lower ranked offer in which to respond and to deliver any required documentation to the lower ranked school.

Q: What if my child has trouble with the Magnet program?

A: Upon entering a Magnet program, all students and parents will sign an Entrance Agreement. This details the expectations for the student in the program. A magnet transfer is a one-year commitment. A recommendation from the growth plan committee could result in a student losing his or her place in this magnet program at the end of the year and returning to their zoned or another choice school at the beginning of the next school year.

Q: When I check on the status of my child's application on the parent dashboard, it says that the application is "Submitted, in processing." What does this mean?

A: For applications submitted after December 18, 2015, this simply means that your application is being processed by our system. No further action by you is required. If you are missing any documentation, you will be contacted. For applications submitted October 1- December 18, 2015 (Phase1), in processing could mean the application was not completed or you live outside the HISD boundary.

Q. I applied by mail and have not received a magnet letter. What should I do?

A. Letters were mailed on March 24th, so please allow the US mail a couple of days to make delivery. If you have not received a magnet letter by March 30, 2016, contact magnet@houstonisd.org or call the Magnet department at (713)-556-6947.

Q. I am experiencing problems with the HISD website and dashboard. What should I do?

A. Send an email to magnet@houstonisd.org or call the Magnet office at (713) 556-6947 explaining in detail, the issues you are having.

Q. I can't remember my login/password for my parent dashboard.

A. Use the "Forgot your password?" feature located at the bottom of the left hand side of the parent login page at <https://hisdchoice.com/apply/login.php>.

Q. Is there still time to apply to a magnet school if I am in or out of the district?

A. Yes, however restrictions may apply. Out of district applications will be considered beginning June 1, 2016. Applications from eligible HISD-resident students will be considered first. When no further eligible HISD-resident student applications remain, out of district eligible students will be considered in the order their applications were submitted. For Magnet-only programs (schools that do not have an attendance zone) such as the High School for Performing and Visual Arts, out of district magnet transfers must be approved by the superintendent of schools and tuition may be required.

Q. What is the process if the student is zoned to a magnet school they applied to? Also, if they get into a different magnet school that they are not zoned to, do they still have the option to switch gears and go to their zoned school? (Whether it is magnet or not).

A. There are different processes for different school types. There is no need for a zoned student to apply to a non-Vanguard elementary program. These are school-wide programs and all students will participate in the magnet program. The exception to this is a Vanguard magnet elementary school. A Magnet Vanguard program requires testing and the use of the Vanguard application. Some secondary programs have a qualification requirements for zoned students as well as out of zone students. Please visit the following link to view the qualification scores and process for application to 2016-2017 secondary magnet programs or reach out to the schools for more detailed information

http://www.houstonisd.org/cms/lib2/TX01001591/Centricity/Domain/21217/Qualifying-For-Secondary_Schools.pdf

Yes, a magnet transfer is a one year commitment. Should the child choose to leave the program voluntarily before the end of the school year, he or she may only return to their zoned campus.

Q: What happens if my child has a place in a Magnet program, but I miss the first day of school?

A: If there is an extenuating circumstance, please contact the Magnet coordinator at the school or the Magnet office at magnet@houstonisd.org or call the Magnet office at (713) 556-6947. Any student with an approved transfer (e.g., Magnet) who does not attend his or her school on the first day of school is no longer guaranteed a spot at that school. When they arrive to enroll, if space is still available, their transfer will be accepted. If there is no longer any space, they will have lost their space and will need to enroll at their zoned school or another program with space. The rationale behind this rule is that we do not want to turn away zoned students because we are saving space for someone who may or may not come to the school. If the school is not over-crowded and space is available, all students wanting to attend will be able to do so.

Very Important! To accept a seat at a magnet program:

Explanation of Magnet Application Results

Very Important! To Accept a Seat at a Magnet program:

For offers before April 6, 2016: By **April 8, 2016** bring to the school whose offer you want to accept:

For offers on or after April 6, 2016: Within 3 schools days of the offer, bring to the school whose offer you want to accept:

- **Proof of current residence**
- **Proof of age** (if your child will be entering Pre-K or kindergarten)

The school will be able to provide you a copy of an **entrance agreement** that you will be required to sign.

Below is a brief explanation of terms. Please reach out to the specific school or to the Office of School Choice for further details.

Status	Meaning	Next Steps	Timeline
Offered Seat <i>For offers before April 6, 2016</i>	Your child qualified for this program and the school is offering a seat in its Magnet program for the 2016-2017 school year.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept the offered seat either online (for parents that submitted an online application) or in person at the school that has offered the seat. 2. Deliver, in person, the documents listed above and sign the entrance agreement. 3. Complete the campus enrollment process. 	Deadline: April 8, 2016
			Failure to do so can result in the loss of the offer.
Offered Seat <i>For offers on or after April 6, 2016</i>			<i>After April 8, 2016</i> Deadline: 3 school days
Waitlist	Your child has qualified and has been placed on the wait list. The number indicates the current place on the wait list.	If you wish to stay on the wait list no action is required. You can contact the school for updates of your waitlist number.	August 12, 2016.
(Qualified Pending)	Because your child still needs to test but has otherwise met all the requirements for this Vanguard program, he or she was entered into the lottery. The school is offering a seat or has placed you on the wait list for the 2016-2017 school year, <i>conditional upon receiving a high enough score for the missing test.</i>	For applicants with no email address, the coordinator for this school will attempt to call you to discuss your options. If for some reason, you do not hear from them, please call them.	August 12, 2016
Not Placed	(Not Qualified) Your child did not meet the qualification guidelines for this specific program.	For information on programs that still have space available, contact us at (713) 556-6947.	August 12, 2016
	(In processing) Your application was not completed or you live outside the HISD boundary or your application was not received by December 18, 2015.	If you provide missing information, the application can be considered subject to space availability – if you live outside the HISD boundary your completed application will be considered after May 31.	August 12, 2016
	(Qualified) You have met the qualifications for this program, but you live outside the HISD boundary.	Your application will be considered after May 31.	August 12, 2016
Dropped/Released	Once offered a seat into a program, all of a student’s lesser-ranked applications, including any other offered seats, are “dropped” or “released”, so that those spots may be offered to other students.	No Action is needed	August 12, 2016