

HISD Magnet Frequently Asked Questions

General Magnet Questions

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: 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 science. 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 November 1, 2014. Applications must be completed and received by December 19, 2014 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 application. 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: 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 are not new to HISD, there will normally be no required documents to submit. However, for students new to HISD or for those missing documents, there are several options this year for submitting documents.

1. Upload required documents directly from online application system (must be legible)
2. Mail or deliver copies of the documents to the Office of School Choice at: Houston Independent School District, Attn: Office of School Choice 4400 W. 18th Street, Houston, TX 77092-8501
3. Mail or deliver copies of the documents to each school you are applying to

Q: When I enter my child's ID# on the online application, some of the information that automatically fills in is incorrect but I can't change it. What should I do?

A: The pre-populated information on the application comes from our Student Information System. The only way to change this information is to contact your child's current HISD school. If your child is not currently enrolled in HISD, you should contact the last HISD school in which your child was enrolled.

Q: How do I apply with a paper application?

A: The process for paper applications has not changed significantly from previous years. If you choose to submit the paper application, you will need to fill out an application for each school to which you are applying and mail or hand deliver the applications to each school.

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

A: When you submit a paper application, you need to attach a complete set of all of the required documentation to each paper application you submit. Application and documents may be submitted by mail or in person. 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.

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"?

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: Some individual schools have additional requirements such as auditions and testing. Please visit the individual schools websites or contact them for further information.

Q: May I visit campuses I am considering?

A: Magnet Awareness week was November 3-7, 2014, and all campuses had school tours beginning at 1 p. m. each day. You may also contact individual schools to schedule a tour for another time.

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

A: Yes, out of district applications are considered after the June 1, 2015 deadline; however, restrictions may apply. Some schools charge tuition for out-of-district students. Nonresident HISD employees shall benefit as if they are in-district residents. Call the Magnet Department for more information at 713-556-6947.

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-mails must be current. Your child's name on the application form should match the name on the child's birth certificate.

Q: What if I did not apply by the deadline?

A: After the Phase 1 deadline, there will be many magnet programs that still have space available. These schools will continue to accept students as long as they have seats available. After the Phase 1 deadline, applications are processed and accepted on a first come first served basis, so it is important to submit your application as soon as possible.

Q: If I apply after the deadline, when will I be notified if my child was accepted?

A: In most cases the school can tell you immediately if they have room to admit additional magnet students. If they do not, your child will be put on the waiting list and you will only be contacted if space becomes available. If you apply after the March 28 parent notification date to a school that does have space available, you should get a response within a week. If you apply after the December deadline but before the parent notification date in March, you will be notified on the March 28 parent notification date.

Selection Process Questions

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 19, 2014, will be placed in a lottery. All students will then be offered spaces in the order assigned in the computer generated lottery. All lotteries are formatted to adhere to HISD school guidelines that randomly assign spaces for qualified applicants and siblings. On March 27, 2015, some students will be offered spaces and some may be placed on a wait list.

Q: My child is applying to a magnet program where I have another child attending. Will my child have priority in the lottery?

A: Each school reserves 25% of available magnet spaces for siblings of students who are currently enrolled and will continue to be enrolled in the coming school year, if they are applying at an entry grade level (the first grade available to magnet students at that school). Siblings not chosen in the sibling lottery will be placed at the top of the wait list and will be contacted when space becomes available.

Q: I have more than one child applying to the same magnet program. If one of my children is accepted, will my other child receive priority for admittance?

A: Two or more siblings applying to the same school are placed on the waitlist for their respective grade levels. If one child accepts a space off the waitlist, then the other children are considered siblings and will follow sibling policy at entry grade levels.

** For further information about the percentage of seats reserved for qualified siblings refer to: HISD School Guidelines, Section 18, pages 12-18. <http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/33269>*

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 eventually enrolls, including his zoned school and other types of Magnet programs.

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

A: If you applied online, you will be notified by email on March 27, 2015. If you applied with a paper application, letters stating the status of your child's application will be mailed on March 27, 2015.

Q: What if my child is not accepted into a magnet program?

A: You may meet with the school's Magnet coordinator to discuss why your child did not meet the requirements to be considered for the program.

Q: What if my child is accepted to more than one school?

A: All students must select and notify one school by April 10 2015, to secure your space in the program. Final acceptance into a program depends upon completing the enrollment process.

Q: May I accept a place at more than one school?

A: No. The online system will not allow a student to accept for more than one school. If you accept a place at more than one school by mail or in person, you will automatically be rejected by one of the schools electronically. Accepting at one school will automatically take you off the acceptance list for all other school *but will not remove you from any waitlists you might be on.*

Q: When my child is offered a seat at a school, how do I accept that offer?

A: If you are accepted into a program and wish to accept your place, at least one parent/guardian must visit the desired school and sign an entrance agreement. Parent/guardian must bring all required documents (proof of residence, proof of age in entering K or PK, proof of HISD residence). NOTE: Failure to deliver all required documents by April 10, 2015 will mean that you are no longer guaranteed a place at that school.

Q: After I accept at a school, what's next?

A: Every school has a registration process that students are required to complete. Submitting proof of address and a signed entrance agreement completes the magnet acceptance process, but *does not* complete the registration process at the school. Contact your school for information about registration and any summer activities in which your child may wish to participate.

Q: What is the best way for me to respond?

A: The fastest, most efficient way for parents to respond is from their online account. However, do not forget that a printed entrance agreement and proof of address must be delivered to the school by April 10, 2015. If you do not have an online account, you may respond in person or through the mail.

Q: Do I respond to the district or to the individual school?

A: You should respond to the individual school where your child has been accepted.

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

A: Yes, you may. Accepting a space at one school will not remove you from another school's waiting list. Please notify the first school that you have accepted an invitation to another program and complete the required form/documentation.

Q: If I accepted a school and change my mind, can my child transfer to one of the other schools to which he/she was accepted?

A: No, you may not change your mind once you have accepted a school. When you accept one school, your child is removed from the accepted list at all other schools, although, as explained above, he/she is not removed from other waiting lists.

Q: Are applications accepted up until the day that school starts, or is there a cut-off date?

A: As long as a school still has space, they will accept and process applications up until the Friday before school starts. After the Phase 1 deadline on December 19, 2014, schools that still have seats available will offer them to qualified students on a first-come, first served basis. After the December deadline, the sooner the application is submitted, the better chance the child has of being accepted into the program.

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. If the student fails to meet the expectations, they may be placed on probation, given a growth plan, or removed from the program at the end of the school year if they do not show progress. Should you decide to remove your child from a program during the school year, you may enroll him/her at your zoned school, provided that school has space available.