

Table of Contents

General Magnet/Choice Questions	1
Application Questions.....	2
Selection Process	4

General Magnet/Choice Questions

Q: What is School Choice?

A: Houston ISD defines School Choice as the process by which parents may apply to any school within the boundaries of the district, pending eligibility and availability of space.

- Note: If your zoned campus has a Gifted and Talented/Vanguard (elementary) program or is a secondary (middle or high school) Magnet program, an application is required.

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 and Choice programs are quality programs, a thorough exploration will enable you to determine the best match for you, your child, and your family.

Q: If I withdraw my child from a Magnet/Choice program during the school year, may I apply to other programs?

A: HISD allows for one transfer per school year. Students who voluntarily withdraw are redirected to enroll at their zoned campus. Find your zoned campus on School Finder at Schoolfinder.houstonisd.org

Q: How may I find out more about the Magnet and/or Choice 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/schoolchoice or call the School Choice Department at (713) 556-6734. Find out more about HISD Vanguard (G/T) programs by calling the Gifted and Talented Department at (713) 556-6954.

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

A: Any student with an approved transfer must attend the first day of school to which the transfer is granted in order to guarantee 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. In cases where there are extenuating circumstances (i.e. but not limited to death in the family or scheduled travel changes beyond the parent's control) the parent may submit an appeal to the School Choice Department for review. Please email your appeal, including all supporting documents to: schoolchoice@houstonisd.org.

Q: When can families who live outside of HISD boundaries apply?

A: Applications may be submitted at any time during Phase 1 and Phase 2. In-district families have priority over those from out of the district. Note: Special and Unique campuses (those without an attendance zone, such as TH Rogers, Kinder HSPVA, etc.) out of district magnet transfers must be approved by the Superintendent and *tuition may be required*.

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. These district-wide programs are designed to serve the needs of identified G/T students. (Students must meet entrance criteria.)

Q: Does my child need to be identified as Gifted and Talented to apply to non-Vanguard Magnet programs?

A: G/T identification requirement is only for Vanguard programs. Students do not need to be identified as G/T to apply to other Magnet programs.

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: No, once a student has been identified as G/T by HISD, they are eligible for Vanguard (G/T) services regardless of school of enrollment.

Application Questions

Q: When may I submit an application?

A: Applications will be accepted for all Magnet and Choice Programs beginning December 10, 2024. Applications must be completed and received by February 12, 2025, to be considered in Phase 1 lotteries. All complete applications received within this window will receive equal consideration, with no advantage being given for those applying earlier during the window.

Q: How do I apply online?

A: Go to www.hisdchoice.com; you may also access the online application by clicking on the following link: <https://choosehisd.my.site.com/Apply>. Follow the instructions on the website to set up your account and complete your applications. If you want to add more schools to the applications submitted, please click on the "Take Action" button in the student's tile. Once the applications are properly submitted, you will receive a confirmation email with the selections made. Please print this document for your records.

Q: I have submitted my application. Can I go back and make changes?

A: Once Phase 1 closes, no changes may be made to those applications. Click on "Take Action" to remove, add, or re-rank your selections. Phase 2 applications may be changed at any time prior to the deadline

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. Please contact the School Choice Department at 713-556-6734 if you need assistance accessing your account.

Q: I made an error on my student's application. Is there a way to fix it, or should I create a new one?

A: If you are able to edit the incorrect information, log in to your account and update the application. If you need assistance, please contact the School Choice Department at 713-556-6734 or via email at: schoolchoice@houstonisd.org.

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

A: For students who were in HISD for the entire 2023-2024 school year, you will not need to submit documents. However, for students who were not in HISD last year or those missing documents, there are several options this year for submitting documents. Documents must be submitted by February 12, 2025, for your Phase 1 applications to be considered complete.

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 School Choice Department, 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 them attached to the applications, once the documents have been uploaded.

3. **Drop off at the School Choice Department** - You can leave copies of the required forms at our office.

4. **Deliver to schools** - You may deliver a copy to one of the schools to which you are applying to request they upload the documents for you.

Q: My student is currently enrolled at a school on a Magnet/Choice transfer, do I have to apply again to remain at the same school next school year:

A: Except for PreK4, 5th, and 8th grades, students will not need to reapply, and their transfer will auto-renew to the same school year.

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/Choice programs may I apply?

A: You may apply to a maximum of 10 Magnet and/or Choice programs.

Q: May I visit the campuses I am considering?

A: School Choice Thursdays will be held every Thursday from October 10 through February 6. All Magnet 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.
- For non-Magnet campuses, please call or check their websites for tour information.

Q: Can a student receiving special education services apply to Magnet/Program Choice Transfers?

- Students wishing to participate in a Magnet or Program Choice are required to follow the HISD application process for School Choice programs.

- To ensure that the student's IEP or Section 504 plan can be implemented in the school choice requested program, the parent should contact the campus Special Education Chair prior to enrollment.
- A student with disabilities who meets the school/program eligibility requirements and is accepted for admission is required to have an Admission, Review, and Dismissal/ Individualized Education Program (ARD/IEP) or Section 504 committee meeting.
- If the campus cannot support the student's educational needs, the parent may opt to keep the student at the campus without receiving Special Education services.
- Please review the Special Education website at www.houstonisd.org/SpEd, or contact the Special Education Department for additional information at 713-556-7042.

Q: If one of my children is ARD'd to attend a school, can the siblings attend that same campus?

A: Depending on whether the school has an entrance criteria requirement, K-12 grade siblings can apply to attend the same school.

Selection Process

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

A: Then all qualified applications received by the deadline, February 12, 2025, will be placed in a lottery. All students will be offered spaces in the order they are picked in the lottery. On March 20, 2025, the lottery results will be made available to parents with some qualified students offered spaces and some placed on a wait list.

Q: Why can't I see programs I am interested in, even though I know they offer them?

- If your zoned campus offers the desired program, you will be unable to apply for the same program at another campus.
- If your residence is outside of the HISD attendance boundary, programs such as Pre-K, IB, Dual Language, and CTE are not an option.
- The program is not being offered for your child's grade level
- Your child does not meet the eligibility requirements for the program.

Q: If I accept a seat at a lower ranked school, will I lose my waitlist spot at higher ranked schools?

A: Accepting a seat to a lower ranked program does not affect your status to higher ranked schools. We encourage you to accept the seat offered, and then wait to see if one of your higher ranked options offers a seat.

Q: What is sibling priority?

A: It is HISD policy that applicants who will have siblings also attending the same campus 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. 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. Sibling priority only applies during Phase 1.

Q: What is the multiple birth option?

A: Parents of qualifying twins, triplets, etc. applying for these children to attend the same Magnet/Choice 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.

- Applications must be submitted for all the children on the same account.
- The siblings must have the same date of birth.
- The siblings must apply to the same schools/programs/focus areas in the same order (These options must match, exactly.)
- The sibling's selections must be in the same ranked order.
- Twin/Multiple option only applies during Phase 1.
- If you have additional questions, or need assistance with your multiples' application, please email schoolchoice@houstonisd.org

Q: Can I apply for the same program in Phase 2 if I am already on the waitlist?

A: This is not recommended as you will have to remove your Phase 1 application from the waitlist. If you then reapply, your new application will be placed on the waitlist behind all Phase 1 applicants and any other applications submitted prior to you during Phase 2.

Q: What is ranking and how does it affect the application process?

- During Phase 1 applications, parents may apply to up to 10 School Choice programs and must rank their selections in order of preference. The School Choice process seeks to provide each applicant with the highest-ranked school to which they are eligible. As a result, it is very important that you consider the rank order of your selected programs carefully.
- When a student is offered placement from the lottery:
 - They will not be considered for placement at lower-ranked programs. For example, if a student ranks 10 programs and is offered placement to their #3 ranked school, they will not be considered for programs ranked #4-10. These campuses will have the status "Assigned to Higher Ranked Choice".
 - They will be placed on the waitlist of higher ranked programs. For example, a student offered placement at their #3 ranked program, will be on the waitlist for the programs ranked #1 and #2.
- In Phase 2, placement is offered on a first come, first served basis AFTER the Phase 1 waitlist has been exhausted.
- Ranking is only applicable in Phase 1

Q: If the student is already on a transfer and wants to apply to another school, do they lose their seat when applying to another campus?

A: Students do not lose their seat when they apply. However, if an offered seat is accepted, they will relinquish the current seat for the upcoming school year.

Q: How will I know if my child was accepted by a school?

A: Always refer to your School Choice application account at <https://choosehisd.my.site.com/Apply>. Account holders should continue to monitor their accounts for status changes and subsequent offers. An email will be sent to the email address on the account, but we caution that some providers place emails from unknown senders in the SPAM or Trash folders. Please check all folders on your account.

Q: What if my child is not accepted into a Magnet/Choice 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.

Q: Who should I contact if I wish to appeal a denied transfer?

A: The School Choice Department manages notifications and appeals. Parents can start the appeal process by emailing schoolchoice@houstonisd.org with the student's name, HISD ID number, and a detailed explanation as to why they are requesting the denial to be reconsidered. The Appeal Committee will decide, based on Board-approved policy and school guidelines, within 10 business days. After determination, the outcome of the appeal is final and may not be appealed.

Q: What if I have accepted one school, but I receive an offer from another school. May I accept this second offer?

A: Yes, you will have five calendar days to decide. If you do nothing, your second offer will expire, and you will retain the offer at the original school. If you accept the offer, your original acceptance will automatically decline.

Q: I am on the waitlist for all Magnet/Choice programs on my list. What should I do next?

A: You may want to consider submitting Phase 2 applications to schools with space available.

Q: Do the waitlists close?

A: If your student is currently in HISD, the applications will retire/expire one week prior to the first day of school. Waitlists do not retire/expire for students new to HISD.

Q: I was offered placement, what should I do next?

- Log in: Ensure you are logged into your School Choice account.
- Upload Proof of Residence: Submit the required documentation.
- Sign the Entrance Agreement: Complete any necessary signatures for the agreement.
- Click "Accept": Confirm by pressing the green "Accept" button.
- Read and Confirm Pop-Up: Don't skip the pop-up; you must read and click "Continue" to finalize the process.
- Decline Option: If you choose to decline, click "Decline" and proceed on the pop-up. Once declined, the seat cannot be reinstated.

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

A: An "Expired" status means that you did not complete the acceptance process within the allotted time. Expired offers cannot be reinstated. If you are still interested in securing a seat, you will need to reapply. Please note that your new application will be placed at the bottom of the waitlist.

Q: Do all schools have the same entrance requirements?

A: No. 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 School Choice website at <https://www.houstonisd.org/domain/56839> or individual school websites.

Q: Which campuses require a matrix score and how is the matrix calculated?

A: Some high school programs, and two middle school programs (Young Women's College Preparatory Academy and Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy for Young Men) require a matrix score. Current HISD students' matrix score appears on the student tile in the School Choice application account.
Final report card from the previous school year and STAAR test scores (if available) from the previous school year. The report card must be from an accredited school program.

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

A: Upon accepting placement to any Magnet/Choice program, all students and parents will sign an Entrance Agreement. This details the expectations for the student in the program. If students fail to meet the expectations, they may be placed on a growth plan, or non-renewed from the program for the following school year if they do not show progress.