



INSTRUCTION: Special Programs

Magnet Schools Admission

1. Definitions

- a. “Child” - an individual not currently enrolled in Baltimore County Public Schools.
- b. “Eligible Applicant” – Any child or student who meets residency requirements for enrollment in the Baltimore County Public Schools and who either:
 1. Meets the age of entry requirement under Maryland law, or
 2. Applies concurrently for early admission to kindergarten and is granted early admission, in accordance with Policy 5110, by the 31st of January following the Magnet application deadline.
- c. “Guardian” - a court appointed guardian of a child or of a student.
- d. “Magnet Programs” – Those programs, established at the recommendation of the Superintendent and with the approval of the Board, with a specialized curriculum or those with an emphasis on instruction that is different from that generally offered in other schools throughout the school system. Magnet programs can be total-school or school-within-a-school programs.
- e. “New Residents” – A child domiciled with the parent/guardian in Baltimore County after the application deadline and documented in accordance with Rule 5150.
- f. “Qualified Applicant” – Any child or student who applies to and meets the established criteria for admission to a specific magnet program.
- g. “Sibling” – A brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or foster child living in the same household.
- h. “Student” – An individual currently enrolled in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

2. Access to Magnet Schools and Programs

- a. To promote equal educational opportunities for all students, it is the goal of the school system to provide all interested students with a fair opportunity for access to magnet schools and programs. To carry out this goal, the Superintendent directs central office staff to assist each magnet program in developing equitable recruitment strategies and to recruit a pool of applicants which reflects the diversity of the school system as a whole.
 - b. At the elementary level, the school system will not employ any academic or other admissions criteria for determining whether a child or student is eligible for a magnet program. For secondary magnet programs that have academic or other admissions criteria, each year the Superintendent or the Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, will review and approve those criteria to determine that they are educationally related to the specialized curriculum or instructional strategy.
 - c. Where school-within-a-school magnet programs exist, the principal will promote interaction, for as much of the school day as possible, between those students participating in the magnet program and those students who do not. The parent/guardian of a child or student residing in the attendance area of a school housing a magnet program also may apply on behalf of the child or student for admission to the program under the procedures set forth in Section 4e or 4f of this rule.
3. Transportation
 - a. The school system will provide transportation to students who reside in the attendance area of a magnet program in accordance with the standards established by the Department of Transportation, as set forth in Policy 3410.
 - b. Transportation to secondary school magnet programs will be provided from pick-up points located at designated school sites in each of the five geographic areas.
 4. Admissions

- a. The Superintendent or the Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, together with a representative of each magnet program, annually will designate the number of available seats by grade for each magnet program for the following school year.
- b. Each year, the Superintendent or Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, will assess the extent to which each magnet program's enrollment reflects the diversity of the school system as a whole. Based on this analysis, the Superintendent or Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, may set recruitment goals for groups that are underrepresented in magnet programs. "Recruitment" may include efforts such as targeted mailings, but will not create any priority or preference for admission.
- c. The Superintendent or Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, will make magnet applications and brochures available at all schools, at the central office, and on the Baltimore County Public School's Web site. Magnet applications and brochures will be distributed to the parents/guardians of students currently attending pre-kindergarten and the fifth and eighth grades in the Baltimore County Public Schools.
- d. The parent/guardian of a child or student who received and has accepted an offer of admission into a magnet program outside of the zoned attendance area must apply for a special permission transfer in accordance with the provisions of Section III.B.2 or Section III.B.8 of Rule 5140 entitled STUDENTS: Enrollment and Attendance. A parent/guardian must complete the "Application for Special Transfer" and "Contract for Special Transfer Students" forms and submit the forms in accordance with directions provided when admission is offered. The school principal will consider the special permission transfer in accordance with the procedures set forth in Rule 5140. Students approved for a special transfer under the provisions of Section III.B.2. or Section III.B.8 of Rule 5140 are required to qualify for magnet programs according to the approved program criteria and will be selected according to the procedures set forth in Sections 4e and 4f of this rule. Parents/guardians of special permission transfer students are responsible for providing transportation to and from the magnet program unless the student can be accommodated by the existing bus routes and existing bus stops of that magnet program. In such instances, the

parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation to and from the existing bus stop.

When the special permission transfer student completes the terminal grade of an elementary or middle school magnet program, the student will attend the respective subsequent middle or high school serving his/her area of residence, unless the student is accepted into a magnet program.

e. Elementary Programs

- (1) The parent/guardian of any eligible applicant may apply to up to three (3) magnet programs.
- (2) Kindergarten Sibling Priority Placement: A parent/guardian applying to an elementary magnet program on behalf of a kindergarten applicant who has a sibling who is currently attending that magnet program and when such sibling will continue to attend that magnet program the subsequent school year will be offered kindergarten placement in the magnet program prior to any lottery process. The application for kindergarten must be received within the regular application period in order to receive sibling priority placement
- (3) In order to receive consideration, the applicant's parent/guardian will submit, by the application deadline, a complete application for the upcoming school year, postmarked or hand delivered to the designated central office. Parents/guardians wishing to change school/program selections must, by the application deadline, submit a new application, postmarked or hand delivered to the designated central office. No program selection changes are accepted after the established application deadline.
- (4) If there are fewer eligible applicants than seats available for any elementary magnet program, the designated central office will admit all eligible applicants to fill the available seats. If there are more eligible applicants than seats available for an elementary magnet program, the designated central office will first apply the kindergarten sibling priority placement process

followed by a random lottery selection process to fill the available seats.

- (5) After the lottery selection process, the designated central office will inform the schools' administration of the students selected and will notify the parent/guardian of all students in writing of the admission status. The parent/guardian of a child or student offered admission will inform the designated central office of acceptance by the designated response deadline. Failure to meet the response deadline will result in forfeiture of the seat.

f. Secondary Programs

- (1) The parent/guardian of any eligible applicant may apply to one (1) program per school in up to three (3) schools. In order to receive consideration, the applicant's parent/guardian will submit, by the designated application deadline, a complete application for the upcoming school year, postmarked or hand delivered to the designated central office. Parents/guardians of applicants wishing to change program selections must, by the application deadline, submit a new application, postmarked or hand delivered to the designated central office. No program selection changes are accepted after the established application deadline. For Baltimore County Public School students, the designated central office will obtain a copy of current individualized education plans (IEP), Section 504 Plans, or English Language Learner (ELL) plans, to determine whether modifications and accommodations should be provided during any audition/assessment. For eligible applicants not attending the Baltimore County Public Schools at the time of application, the parent/guardian will submit appropriate documentation of educational modifications and accommodations with the application.
- (2) All applications for secondary magnet programs will be reviewed at the designated central office to determine the eligibility of each applicant using the criteria approved by the Superintendent or Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, in accordance with Section 2b of this rule. The

designated central office will notify the parents/guardians of ineligible applicants in writing of the application status.

- (3) The designated central office, using criteria appropriate to the specific magnet program, in accordance with Section 2b of this rule, will screen applicants to determine the number of qualified applicants. If there are fewer qualified applicants than seats available for any secondary magnet program, the designated central office will admit all qualified applicants. If there are more qualified applicants than seats available for a secondary magnet program a random lottery selection process will be conducted to fill the available seats.
- (4) At the middle school level where the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of available seats for any magnet program, up to 10% of the seats may be filled first with qualified applicants who show exceptional commitment and promise in the specialized program as evidenced by their performance on the approved magnet assessment. The remaining seats will be filled using the centralized random lottery selection process from the remaining pool of qualified applicants.
- (5) At the high school level where the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of available seats for any magnet program, up to 20% of the seats may be filled first with qualified applicants who show exceptional commitment and promise in the specialized program as evidenced by their performance on the approved magnet assessment. The remaining seats will be filled using the centralized random lottery selection process from the remaining pool of qualified applicants.
- (6) After the random lottery selection process, the designated central office will inform the school's administration of the students selected and will inform the parent/guardian in writing of the admission status. The parent/guardian of a child or student offered admission will inform the designated central office by the designated response deadline of acceptance. Failure to meet the response deadline will result in forfeiture of the seat.

5. Waiting Lists

- a. A waiting list will be generated as a result of the random lottery selection process for each oversubscribed magnet program. The waiting list will be maintained by the designated central office until the first day of the second semester of the school year for which admission is being sought.
- b. The parent/guardian of elementary and secondary students on waiting lists who are offered assignments to a magnet program must accept the assignment within five (5) business days of the date of the offer of assignment. Failure to meet the response deadline will result in forfeiture of that seat.

6. New Residents

Parents/Guardians of students who are new residents of Baltimore County after the application deadline and before the start of the school year for which admission is being sought may submit to the designated central office a letter of interest for one (1) magnet program per school in up to three (3) schools. If space permits, new residents meeting the eligibility criteria for the program(s) in which they are interested will be selected in accordance with the procedures set forth in Sections 4.E and 4.F of this rule.

7. Withdrawals

- a. A student admitted to a magnet program, according to the procedures set forth in Section 4, items a-f of this rule, may remain in the program as long as the parent/guardian is a resident of Baltimore County, and the student has not been withdrawn to attend another school, public or private. If a family or student moves within Baltimore County but out of the magnet zoned attendance area, transportation will not be provided.
- b. Any request for temporary leave from a magnet program must be approved, in writing and in advance of such leave of absence, by the principal of the school. A leave of absence from the magnet program will be considered under the following conditions:

- (1) A student may be granted a leave of absence for a maximum of one (1) year if the family and/or student moves out of Baltimore County temporarily.
 - (2) A student may be granted a leave of absence from the magnet program for the period of time necessary to complete any of the following: a stay as a patient in a hospital for an extended period of time; acceptance into a Board approved alternative education program or another exceptional education program; or enrollment in a licensed full-time substance abuse treatment program.
 - (3) A student may be granted a leave of absence from the magnet program for medical reasons for the period of time necessary to complete treatment and/or recovery from treatment. Requests which are based on medical, physical, or mental health reasons must be accompanied by documentation from a physician or mental health provider.
- c. Students who violate the provisions of Policy 5550, *Disruptive Behavior*, or Policy 5540, *Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs*, will be suspended and expelled in accordance with applicable policies and rules. At the end of the expulsion period, the superintendent's designee, in consultation with the area office, may either return the students to the magnet program from which they were expelled or to another appropriate, non-magnet school or program.
- d. Students in danger of failing any magnet course will receive written notification of their status in accordance with Section 6 of Rule 5220 entitled *STUDENTS: Reporting to Parents*. Counseling regarding the propriety of a student's continuation in magnet schools and programs will take place at the end of the school year.

Any decision by the principal to withdraw a student from a magnet program because of academic failure in a magnet course must be approved in advance by the Coordinator of Gifted & Talented Education and Magnet Programs or a designee. The principal will provide the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) with a written explanation of the basis for the withdrawal that includes the process for appealing the decision.

A student who is withdrawn from a magnet program housed in a comprehensive school will be required to attend the student's home school unless an application for Special Permission Transfer to another comprehensive school is filed by the parent/guardian and approved in accordance with Policy and Rule 5140.

- e. Parents/guardians may remove students from magnet schools and programs and return them to their home schools. Principals of the students' home schools will not deny the enrollment of such students.

8. Appeals

- a. Denials of admission to magnet program may be appealed by the parent/guardian and must be made in writing to the Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, within ten (10) calendar days from the date of the notification letter or the postmarked date, whichever is later. An appeal will be considered timely filed, if, within the allotted time period, it has been delivered to the Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, postmarked, or deposited in the U.S. mail as registered or certified mail. Electronic submissions will not be accepted. The Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, or a designee will evaluate the appeal and issue a written decision.
- b. If the appeal is denied by the Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, or a designee, the written decision will inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the right to appeal.

Appeals of magnet admissions denials by the Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, or a designee must be made in writing to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) calendar days of the date of the denial letter from the Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, or a designee, or the postmarked date, whichever is later. An appeal will be considered timely filed, if, within the allotted time period, it has been delivered to the Superintendent, or postmarked, or deposited in the U.S. mail as registered or certified mail. Electronic submissions will not be accepted. The Superintendent or his/her designee will research and evaluate the appeal and issue a written decision.

- c. If the appeal is denied by the Superintendent or a designee, the written decision will inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the right to appeal in writing to the Board within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the denial letter in accordance with §4-205 of the Education Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* and Policy 8339 – Internal Board Policies: Operations, Appeal Before Hearing Examiner. An appeal will be considered timely filed, if, within the allotted time period, it has been delivered to the Board, postmarked, or deposited in the U.S. Mail as registered or certified mail.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article §§4-205 and 7-301
COMAR 13A.08.01.02, *Age for School Attendance*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5110, *Admission*
Board of Education Policy 5140, *School Attendance Areas*
Board of Education Policy 5150, *Enrollment and Attendance*
Board of Education Policy 5220, *Reporting to Parents*
Board of Education Policy 6400, *Magnet Schools and Programs*

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