

Montgomery County Public Schools
Regional/Countywide High School Common Application Process
2019-2020

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are regional/countywide high school application programs?

MCPS offers a variety of college and career readiness programs that have a set number of seats available to entering Grade 9 students. Each program has an admissions process that is either interest-based (lottery) or criteria-based (admissions review of multiple measures). Programs begin in Grade 9 and students apply during the fall of Grade 8. A student's home/base high school, current middle school and course enrollment are all considered for eligibility for programs. Students may review their Regional/Countywide High School Application Programs Eligibility Report available in their myMCPS Student portal (early October) or review the Programs At-A-Glance on the MCPS High School Special Programs website: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/high/> Most programs have central stop transportation from designated high school clusters.

2. What is the process to apply to regional/countywide programs?

New this year, all of MCPS' regional/countywide application programs (full time programs for rising Grade 9 students) will be located on one common online application. All students enrolled by September 20, 2019 will have a personalized common online application in their myMCPS Student Portal (Document Library). Current students may only apply using their MCPS Google login and password. The personalized online application should only be used by the student it is intended. Parents may access their student's eligibility report in the myMCPS Parent Portal.

Private or home-schooled students who are residents of Montgomery County may access the MCPS High School Common Application on the MCPS website noted above. An MCPS Student ID is required to apply to a program.

Students who apply to criteria-based programs will receive an email that provides the supplemental application that is to be completed by the due date of November 1, 2019.

3. I live in Montgomery County and my student attends a private school. How do we apply?

Private and home schooled students must work with their middle school to receive an MCPS Student ID which is needed to begin the application process for the regional/countywide application programs. To apply: <http://bit.ly/MCPSHSPprivate> and reference the "[how to apply](#)" document.

4. Can I use any email to submit my high school application?

To submit the application, the student's MCPS assigned Google email and password must be used. Grade 8 students currently enrolled in MCPS since September 20, 2019 will have a personalized application link in their myMCPS Student Portal included in their high school application programs eligibility report. Parents of current MCPS students will have a copy of their student's eligibility report as well. Parents may contact their school to begin access to their myMCPS Parent Portal.

Private or home-schooled students who are residents of Montgomery County may access the MCPS High School Common Application while using the assigned MCPS Student ID. For best interface for completing the application, it is suggested to have a Gmail account to submit the application.

NOTE: MCPS is only able to provide accounts for students who are currently attending a school within the system. Private or home schooled students and parents will not have an MyMCPS account. Eligibility information can be found on the High School Programs At-A-Glance on the MCPS website noted above.

5. What is the difference between criteria-based programs and the interest-based programs?

Criteria-based programs have an admissions process that uses a holistic review of a student's profile. Students are eligible for particular programs based on their home/base high school, current middle school and course enrollment. More information can be found on the High School Programs At-A-Glance on the website above or on the student's eligibility report. Criteria such as report cards, teacher recommendations, an external above grade level assessment, student essay and/or the application may all be part of the admissions review. A diverse admissions committee will review the student files to make recommendations for placement into a program.

Interest-based programs vary throughout the county and have eligibility requirements that may be based on a student's home/base school and current middle school. If more requests are submitted than seats available, then a lottery is conducted.

Students may be invited to multiple programs and may only accept one. All Results will be mailed home to students/parents in early February.

6. My address on this eligibility report is wrong, what do I do?

The address on the eligibility report was pulled from MCPS records. A new report will not be generated at this time, however, parents may review the High School Programs At-A-Glance and use the general MCPS Regional/Countywide Application Programs application link. Parents should contact their school to update their home address.

7. I already submitted my high school application but want to add/remove programs. What do I do?

The initial application may **ONLY** be submitted **ONE** time. Be very certain of your decisions. If you are undecided about a program, it is recommended to apply. If an addition is required, contact the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services (DCCAPS) team at 240-740-2540. *(There is no need to contact DCCAPS if a program is being removed.)*

The Supplemental Application for criteria-based programs found in the email receipt from the initial application can be edited repeatedly until the deadline. Only the last submission will be visible and used during selection.

8. We may have submitted two applications for the same student using the personalized student link and the MCPS general common hs application link. What will happen?

The most recent submission will be used. If there are any questions about the submissions, contact the DCCAPS at 240-740-2540.

9. I submitted the high school application program with my choices. However, I did not get the confirmation high school email or application program receipt?

Students who complete the high school application will get an email with information for next steps (if applicable) and a PDF receipt. If a parent email was entered and no confirmation email or receipt was received after 24 hours of submission, check your JUNK or SPAM folder first. If there is no email or receipt, contact the DCCAPS at 240-740-2540.

10. Once I begin a program can I return to my home school anytime?

Students who accept an application program outside of their home/assigned school and elect to leave the program, may return to their home/assigned school at anytime. It is recommended that students attempt to remain for one quarter to provide time for transition. Once a student vacates their seat in an application program, it will be filled with a student from the wait pool or wait list.

11. How do I learn about central stop transportation options?

Parents and students may review current stops of existing programs on the MCPS Transportation website. New programs and their transportation routes will be available in the late spring. These routes are subject to change due to enrollment patterns throughout the county. Routes to application programs may run from 30-75 minutes one way.

12. How does the boundary change impact my eligibility for programs?

Students are encouraged to apply for all programs of interest. The admissions process will be conducted after the Board of Education approves the final boundary recommendations. Final eligibility will be based on the boundaries set for the 2020-2021 school year.

13. What is the admissions process for the new Regional International Baccalaureate Programs located at Watkins Mill, John F. Kennedy and Springbrook High Schools? How many seats are available?

All countywide and regional IB programs will use the same criteria for review. These includes report cards, teacher recommendations, external above-grade level assessment, application and student essay. An admissions committee will review the student data to make their recommendations for student placement.

The countywide program at Richard Montgomery HS offers 100 out of area seats and 25 local seats. Each of the regional programs offer 50 out of area seats and 25 local seats. Students invited to the countywide or regional IB programs begin as an academic group in Grade 9, in 3 - 4 courses, and begin the IB Diploma Programme courses in Grade 11.

14. Will I have to submit an athletic waiver to play athletics at the school where I accept a program?

An athletic waiver will not be required for students who accept a seat into an application program outside of their home/base school.

15. Does my student need to take a test? If so what test is given?

Students applying to interest-based programs (lottery) do not need to test. Students applying to criteria-based programs will take the the external assessment, Cognitive Test of Abilities Test (CogAT®) full battery on December 7, 2019 (with the exception of the VAC and LTI application programs). Additional criteria includes a scored student essay , report cards and teacher recommendations. Testing locations will be communicated to students who have submitted an application for a criteria-based programs the week of November 11, 2018. Testing will begin at 8 am.

16. What is the CogAT® Test ?

The CogAT test measures the level and pattern of cognitive development of a student compared to age mates and grade mates. CogAT® measures students' learned reasoning abilities in the three areas most linked to academic success in school: Verbal, Quantitative and Nonverbal reasoning. The CogAT® measures three different cognitive abilities.

- The verbal section measures a child's ability to remember and transform sequences of English words, to understand them and to make inferences and judgments about them.
- The quantitative section measures a child's understanding of basic quantitative concepts and relationships.
- The nonverbal section measures reasoning using pictures and geometric shapes. This section reduces the impact of language on the student's score.

17. Is there a test prep booklet for this test?

There is not a test prep booklet.

18. If the application program is at my home school, do I have to apply?

It is recommended that all application programs of interest to the student are indicated on the high school common application. This will ensure that a student was able to fully participate in the admissions process. There are several application programs where students who are assigned to the high school may request to participate in the program by request-- which includes the Montgomery College Middle College at Northwood or Northwest High School and the application Programs at Seneca Valley HS

19. Can you tell me more about the student essay in the testing?

The student essay is a brief response written by the student at the time of testing. Students will have 30 minutes to respond to a prompt. The prompt will be scored and the score will be provided to the selection committee as part of the review.

20. What costs are associated with the high school application programs?

The high school application programs do not incur a cost to apply. Once enrolled in the program, some programs have exams or certification costs. Programs that may incur a cost for select certifications, licenses, exams and/or courses include the International Baccalaureate Program, Montgomery College Middle College, Montgomery College Early College and some of the career readiness programs. Financial assistance may be available eligible for students. For specific information, visit the program website and/or contact the program coordinator.

21. Is there a recorded presentation of the high school application programs that I can watch?

There are a variety of resources on the MCPS special programs website to help parents and students. There is a two-minute video showing parents/students 'how to apply' to the program and a high school parent information meeting presentation for parents who may have missed the meeting or would like to review the material again: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/high/>.