

# GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

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## Magnet Program Identification Process

### Screening:

WCPS screens all students for potential placement in advanced programs in accordance with Chapter 13A.04.07.02 of Code of Maryland Regulations. The depth of the screening varies with the intensity of the advanced program. WCPS Magnet Programs represent Level III on the [\*Continuum of Services for Gifted and Talented Programs\*](#) and are designed to serve groups of the most competitive students in elementary and middle school. During grades one and five, results from the administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test™ Form 7 (CogAT™) determine eligibility to apply to WCPS Elementary and Middle School Magnet Programs. Since inter-reliability of the assessment must be preserved, students will not be retested during the same year and must wait two years until being tested again with the CogAT™.

### Identification:

Students, who are eligible to apply to a WCPS Magnet Program, submit an application by the deadline and are placed into the applicant pool database. In accordance with §13A.04.07.02 of COMAR, multiple indicators of potential are then used as part of the complete identification process. A combination of these indicators, each weighted in relation to its value, comprises a candidate's final composite score. The ability testing and interview with task are assigned the highest weights. Other score weights vary by school and are determined by the qualifications required for students' success in that program. The following data are included in the **composite score**:

- + Norm-referenced ability testing
- + Norm-referenced performance testing
- + Task with interview
- + Teacher perception instruments
- + State testing (PARCC) and/or county-based assessments

### Admission:

Cohort groups of magnet students begin during grades two and six. The process for application and entry is rigorous, and no applicant is guaranteed placement. The number of slots available and cut scores for admission is not predetermined as applicant pools vary from school-to-school and from year-to-year. Admitted students are eligible to continue

with their cohort group pending satisfactory academic performance and cooperative behavior.

### **Out-of-Cohort Placements:**

Openings for magnet programs in grades three, four, five, seven, and eight are dependent upon the program's current enrollment; therefore, openings in these grades are not guaranteed. The student must be enrolled in a school-based Gifted and Talented Education Program (GATE at elementary school and merit at middle school) and performing in the top quartile of that group. Teachers may recommend students for application to a third, fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth-grade magnet program by completing the *GATE Referral Instrument* and submitting artifacts of student work as evidence of strong performance on higher-level tasks. A parent may also initiate this process and access the *GATE Referral Instrument*. Eligible students will then apply to a magnet program and complete an ability assessment, the CogAT™. Additional identification data are the same as for original cohort applicants; however, students placed typically achieve a composite score above 90 percent, as they are joining a cohort of students who have already been accelerated for a year or more.

Only students who are enrolled in WCPS will be tested using the CogAT™. Homeschooled and private school students are screened via a transcript review of current testing data. Home-schooled students who reside in Washington County may be tested with CogAT™, but this may only happen during the county-based CogAT™ testing window. The parent(s) of a homeschooled or private school student may also elect to have his/her child tested outside of WCPS by an individual certified in the administration of the Weschler Intelligence Scales, Fourth Edition (WISC-IV). If eligible, non-WCPS students will then be invited to apply and continue with the identification process.

### **Composite Score Results and Appeals Process:**

Parents may request a review of their child's identification data following the conclusion of the process, which is typically mid-March. Also, appeals are handled at the conclusion of the process as follows:

1. Families will have 10 days following the date on the notification of non-placement to submit a written appeal to the Office of PreK-12 Advanced Programs.
2. A description of the criteria and a review of the student's scores in relation to those criteria will occur between the parent/legal guardian of the non-placed student and the Supervisor of PreK-12 Advanced Programs.
3. If further consideration is still requested, the parent/legal guardian may elect to contact an individual who is a certified/licensed administrator of the Weschler Intelligence Scales, Fourth Edition (WISC-IV). Scores at or above a full-scale IQ score of 135, along with the full report of all subtest information, will be accepted

by the Office of Advanced Programs. Further testing will be funded by the parent/legal guardian of the student.

### **Transfer Students--New to WCPS**

Students who are new to WCPS and have participated in a gifted magnet program in another county or state just prior entering WCPS may also submit their transcripts for review by the Office of PreK-12 Advanced Programs. Scores used for admission to the previous magnet program must be submitted and be competitive with those of students currently enrolled in WCPS Magnet Program to which they are requesting admission. Additional requirements, such as an interview with task, may be required of the transfer candidate. Additional testing data, directly related to the content of the program and competitive with data of its cohort members, may be required by the Selection Committee. Such admissions are considered unique and are handled on a case-by-case basis. Admission by transfer is not guaranteed.

### **Transfer Students—Currently Enrolled in a WCPS Magnet Program**

Families who have relocated within WCPS and have a currently-enrolled magnet student may request to enroll their child in a magnet program that is closer to their new residence, pending the following criteria

- ✓ The student's original application data are competitive with those students enrolled in the cohort to which he/she is requesting admission.
- ✓ The student is experiencing academic success.
- ✓ The student is exhibiting cooperative behavior.

Additional requirements, such as an interview with task, may be required of the transfer candidate. Additional testing data, directly related to the content of the program and competitive with data of its cohort members, may be required by the Selection Committee. Such admissions are considered unique and are handled on a case-by-case basis. Admission by transfer is not guaranteed.