Montgomery County Public Schools
High School Magnet - Frequently Asked Questions

Data/Criteria
1.   What data was used to evaluate my child?

The review process uses a multiple measures approach that include both district-level and externally-developed measures of students. The data that was included: the student applicant responses, Grade 7 and MP1 of Grade 8 report cards, teacher recommendations, student services^, student score to the essay, and the external assessment, Cognitive Test of Abilities Test (CogAT) full battery. The process for selection is race-neutral, name and school blind.

^ services such as receiving special education services, ESOL- English for Speakers of Other Languages, 504 accommodations plan and Free and Reduced Meals

2.   What do the CogAT® percentile scores mean?

The CogAT® Test measures the level and pattern of cognitive development of a student compared to age peers and grade peers. 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.

3. How can I see the CogAT® narrative scores for my child?

A CogAT® student narrative is available in your myMCPS parent portal. For questions about access to your parent portal, contact your student's current school. Private school applicants may contact the high school where they tested for their narrative reports.

4.   Why does my child have an "X" in their CogAT® percentile report?

In order to receive a CogAT® percentile the student needs to complete a certain number of questions. If your student did not complete the minimum number of questions in a section, they will not receive a score to calculate a percentile for that section. Since CogAT® is a timed assessment, it is possible some students did not finish enough of the questions in a given section of the test for a score.

5. Why did MCPS use local norms? How were they created?

Based on guidance from the National Association for Gifted Children, the use of local norms was undertaken to ensure equity and access in identification of students for program access. The locally normed percentiles on the CogAT assessment were created from the distribution of Standard Age Scores(SAS) for students based on the socioeconomic status of elementary schools. SAS are provided by the vendor for all students and allow for the comparison "of the rate and level of cognitive development of a particular student with others in the same age group." This process of determining local norms based on the SAS follows the local norming approach implemented by CogAT developers. As indicated in the CogAT Score Guide, "Standard age scores use the power of national norms to control for the effects of age." Additionally, given students tested were in the same grade and tested around the same time, the effects of grade are also controlled with SAS. To determine the locally normed percentiles, students with the highest SAS in the group were assigned the highest percentile rank and those with the lowest SAS were assigned the lowest percentile rank.

Wait Pool

6. Are the students in the wait pool ranked?

The wait pool is not ranked. It is a collection of students who are qualified applicants that will be reviewed further if spots in the program become available. The original screening committee establishes the wait pool at the time of screening. Though it varies from year to year, there are generally about 50-75 students in the wait pool.

7. When will the wait pool students be reviewed again?

The entire wait pool is reviewed again at the appeals screening in early March. At this time, we will know who has accepted our initial invitations to attend the magnet program. Based on this information, we will offer invitations to students in the wait pool to fill those spots.

8. How many students will be invited from the wait pool?

Though it varies from year to year, spots are offered to wait pool students at the appeals screening in early March due to attrition. Occasionally, there is movement during the summer months. If invited, the program coordinator would contact the individual family.

Appeals

9.   What is the process for an appeal?

Students in the wait pool are automatically reviewed during the appeal process- therefore is it unnecessary to appeal unless there are compelling circumstances that may indicate an impact to your student's performance. If you wish to appeal the decision(s), submit an appeal letter addressing one or more of the following reasons for seeking review of the decision:

· There is new information that was not available at the time of initial review of student information that significantly changes the academic profile of the student.

· There is a hardship or unique circumstance.

Teacher recommendations, external tests, and sample work will not be considered.

If your child was initially identified for the <u>wait pool</u>, you do not need to submit an appeal. The appeal committees will automatically review all wait pool candidates as part of the Level I appeals process.

10.   Where do we send the appeal letter?

Appeal letters should be sent to appropriate program coordinators. This information is included in your letter. Include your child's student ID number, your signature and telephone number. The letter(s) must be postmarked by **Friday, February 22, 2019**. The appeal decision will be mailed to you by late March.

11.   What are the possible outcomes of an appeal?

The possible outcomes to an appeal vary based on the initial results. The appeals committee will review each profile and make informed decisions based on spaces available. If there is no change to the current status of the initial decision, the student will remain status quo. If there is a change, the student could either be invited if currently in the wait pool, or be moved into the wait pool if originally not invited to the program.