

The Elementary Magnet Program

Overview

The Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Elementary Magnet Program offers a comprehensive education serving the unique needs and varied learning styles of academically gifted students in grades 1 – 5. The program provides academic rigor and challenge to students who meet FCPS selection criteria and who are performing at least one year above grade level in language arts and mathematics. The program extends and enriches FCPS Essential Curriculum through depth and complexity of topics, the integration of several disciplines, and a variety of learning activities, including research and independent projects. The pace of instruction is accelerated to better meet the needs of the learner.

Students seeking placement in the Elementary Magnet Program are screened on a countywide basis. Any student offered a placement in the program is assigned to a magnet site based on his/her residence. Magnet sites are housed within New Market, North Frederick and Urbana Elementary Schools. See **Magnet Site Attendance Areas** (<http://www.fcps.org/dept/gnt/AttendanceAreas.pdf>).

Program Outcomes

The Elementary Magnet Program affords students opportunities to:

- ✍ Think critically, logically, and creatively
- ✍ Develop understandings of concepts and essential principles of content
- ✍ Learn and apply the skills and processes of advanced research, experimentation, problem solving, and decision making
- ✍ Enhance skills of working independently and collaboratively
- ✍ Advance individual commitment to long term tasks and projects
- ✍ Manage time effectively
- ✍ Communicate effectively through written, oral, visual and performance products
- ✍ Self-evaluate performance
- ✍ Value learning based on high performance standards
- ✍ Respect diversity in people, opinions, interests and learning styles

Who should be nominated?

To be successful in the Elementary Magnet Program, a student must have:

- ✍ high academic performance across disciplines
- ✍ self-motivation
- ✍ task commitment
- ✍ planning skills
- ✍ organizational skills
- ✍ creativity

In determining if nomination and/or placement in the magnet program are appropriate, parents/guardians and teachers should consider the child's social/emotional development. For some students, being away from the neighborhood school setting would be difficult. Also, some children may become frustrated and unable to cope with high degrees of academic intensity. In such cases, placement in the magnet program is not appropriate. To ensure the overall development and well-being of the child, the staff of the current school and the Office of Gifted and Talented Education are willing to discuss these and related issues with parents.

Students who are nominated for the Elementary Magnet Program should exhibit **unique academic needs that cannot reasonably be met by the regular program available at the neighborhood school.**

Who May Nominate a Child?

Teachers and administrators of the current school may nominate students for the magnet program. Parents/guardians also may nominate their child. It is recommended that parents consult with the child's current teachers and principal to help gauge the appropriateness of the magnet program for their child. Parents of students who are home schooled or enrolled in private schools should contact the Office of Gifted and Talented Education for nomination procedures.

What is the Nomination Process?

- ✍ Nomination packets are available in public and non-public schools in Frederick County, from the Office of Gifted and Talented Education, or on-line at <http://www.fcps.org/content/gnt.cfm> in early to mid February.
- ✍ **The deadline for submitting nomination forms to the principal of a child's current school is early to mid March. The exact deadline is provided on the application.**
- ✍ School staff members compile required documents and administer a nationally normed individual achievement test.
- ✍ Each completed nomination packet is forwarded to the Nominations Review Committee, comprised of specialists in language arts, mathematics, and gifted education.

What are the Criteria for Selection?

Any student nominated for placement in the magnet program must exhibit all of the following characteristics:

- ~~///~~ Current successful performance in both reading and mathematics at one or more years above current enrolled grade level.
- ~~///~~ Strong ratings on teacher checklists of learning behaviors, mathematics performance, and language arts achievement.
- ~~///~~ Strong ratings on parent checklists of student learning behaviors.
- ~~///~~ Superior scores on a nationally normed achievement test as designated by the Office of Gifted and Talented Education.

What is the Placement and Enrollment Process?

- ~~///~~ The Nominations Review Committee considers each nominated student to determine if placement in the Elementary Magnet Program is appropriate.
- ~~///~~ Placement decisions are mailed to parents and principals in mid-May.
- ~~///~~ Each magnet site invites parents of students who are offered placements to an orientation in May. The orientation is designed to assist parents in deciding whether or not to accept the placement offer.
- ~~///~~ A brief video presentation providing examples of magnet program instruction may be borrowed or viewed at the Office of Gifted and Talented Education at 115 East Church Street. Interested parents may contact the office at 301-696-6891.
- ~~///~~ Parents must notify the Office of Gifted and Talented Education of their decision to accept or decline the offer of magnet placement by late May and must enroll their child at the magnet school by early June.
- ~~///~~ A specific appeal procedure is outlined in the letter of notification sent to parents of students not recommended for placement.

How is Achievement of Magnet Students Assessed?

Performance standards in the magnet program are high. Student progress is assessed continually using information from multiple sources including:

- ~~///~~ evidence of student task commitment
- ~~///~~ teacher observations
- ~~///~~ student tasks and projects
- ~~///~~ unit assessments
- ~~///~~ county assessments

Communication between home and school is essential for an effective program. Parents with concerns regarding student progress should contact the classroom teacher. Conferences regarding a student with ongoing difficulty are scheduled with school personnel to review support strategies and/or to determine if continued placement in the magnet program is appropriate. Students who meet or exceed magnet program standards maintain their placement status from year to year.

For Further Information . . .

If you have questions please contact:
Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Programs
Frederick County Public Schools
115 East Church Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

301-696-6891

<http://www.fcps.org/content/gnt.cfm>

The Frederick County Public School system does not discriminate in admissions, access, treatment, or employment in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national origin, religion or disability. For more information contact the Executive Director of Legal Services, 301-696-6851.