



## **Academic Magnet Entrance Requirements 2016**

- In order to qualify for entrance into an academic magnet school, a student must meet two requirements:
  - academic grades
  - standardized test scores
- The large majority of parents will not need to take action to prove that these requirements have been met.
- If a student has attended a Metro school in the past, his or her data is already loaded into the application system. When filling out the application, the system will automatically know if he or she qualifies for academic magnets.
- If the student qualifies, the academic magnets will appear as options for application. If the student does not qualify, the academic magnets will not appear.
- If parents believe there is an error in this reporting, they can call the Family Information Center at (615) 259-INFO (4636) to investigate.
- If a child is new to Metro Schools, the parent will have to provide a written application and documentation that the requirements have been met. They should contact the Family Information Center to get that process started.

### **Grades Requirement**

- To meet the grade requirement, the student must have an academic average of 85 or above for all subjects combined for both the spring semester of the previous year and the first grading period of the current year.
  - In other words, find the average of all final grades in the spring semester. If the average is 84.5 or above, the student meets this requirement.
- The student cannot have any failing grades in any subjects during any grading period in this time frame.



## Standardized Test Requirement

- Because there were no TCAP standardized tests given in the 2015-16 school year, the testing requirement has been altered for the 2016 application period. Parents will be given a report indicating whether their child met the new testing requirement. This report will include all relevant test scores.
- For entrance into academic magnets during the 2017-18 school year, a student can meet the assessment requirements in any one of the following six ways:
  - A student who took the TCAP during the 2014-15 school year will qualify if the student's 2015 TCAP scores were Proficient or Advanced for both Reading and Math.
    - In other words, since we can't use 2016 TCAP data, we will instead use 2015 TCAP data.
  - A student who attended an MNPS school in 2015-16 will also qualify if the student's TCAP test score history indicates the student would likely have tested Proficient or Advanced for both Reading and Math on the 2016 TCAP.
    - Projections for what a student will or would have scored on TCAP tests are generally pretty accurate. They are based on all previous TCAP testing.
  - A student who attended an MNPS school in 2015-16 will also qualify if benchmark testing from the first two grading periods of 2015-16 meets a minimum score.
    - Benchmark tests are given throughout the year to measure student progress and project standardized test scores.
    - The minimum score is set at a sum of 14 stanine for English/Language Arts and Math combined.
  - A student currently enrolled in MNPS will also qualify if benchmark testing from the first grading period of this school year (given in late September of 2016) meets a minimum score.
    - Benchmark testing for this year is brand new and improved from 2015-16.



- Once again, the minimum score is set at a sum of 14 stanine for English/Language Arts and Math combined.
- A student who is new to Metro Schools or perhaps even new to Tennessee can qualify by submitting test results from a nationally normed achievement test that meet a minimum score.
  - In most cases, this will be a state standardized test from another state, though it could also be a privately given test that is nationally normed.
  - Once again, the minimum score is set at a sum of 14 stanine for English/Language Arts and Math combined.
  - To get these results, parents will need to contact their child's previous school or school district.
- Lastly, if a child has never taken a nationally normed achievement test, parents may choose to pay for private testing.
  - Once again, the minimum score is set at a sum of 14 stanine for English/Language Arts and Math combined.

## English Learners

- English learners are a special case because they can meet the standardized test requirement with just one subject instead of two: either English/Language Arts **or** Math.
- For entrance into academic magnets during the 2017-18 school year, an English learner (EL) student can meet the assessment requirements in any one of the following four ways:
  - An EL student who attended an MNPS school in 2015-16 will qualify if the student's TCAP test score history indicates the student would likely have tested Proficient or Advanced for either Reading or Math on the 2016 TCAP.
  - An EL student currently enrolled in MNPS will also qualify if benchmark testing from the first two grading periods of the 2015-16 school year meets a minimum score of 7 stanine or above.



- An EL student currently enrolled in MNPS will also qualify if benchmark testing from the first grading period of this school year (given in late September of 2016) meets a minimum score of 7 stanine or above.
- An EL student who is new to Metro Schools or perhaps even new to Tennessee can qualify by submitting test results from a nationally normed achievement test that meet a minimum score of 7 stanine or above.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### ***What are benchmark tests? Given the issues with state testing last year, are they reliable?***

Yes, they are reliable. Benchmark tests are given periodically throughout the year to make sure students are learning what they are supposed to be learning during each grading period. They are based on the state's academic standards, but created by teachers inside the child's school. The benchmarks given last year lined up very well with results from the TCAP tests given the year before, meaning they were reliable indicators of what students learned,

#### ***How are projections calculated? What tests/criteria are used?***

Projections are calculated by the state's vendor that measures student growth. To project a future score, they look at all previous state test data over multiple years and multiple subjects to make the best estimate of what a child will likely score on that year's tests. Projections have proven to be very accurate overall.

#### ***What is a "stanine"?***

A stanine is just a unit of measurement used for standardized testing. Stanines range from 1 to 9, with scores of 7 to 9 considered above average.

#### ***How can parents know ahead of time if their children qualify? Can they see benchmark results somewhere?***

Because the 2016 testing did not happen, and because this process has become much more complicated as a result, we plan to give students the benefit of the doubt and use all test data we have available to use to determine who qualifies for an academic magnet and who does not. After your child takes the new benchmark test at the end of September 2016, you will receive a report with scores from that benchmark test, as well as the results of all other tests we will use for magnet qualification.