Elementary School FAQS
2020-2021 School Year

**GENERAL**

**How do I apply?**

Go to go.cps.edu. To apply using the online application site, click ‘Sign Up’ to create an account. To apply using the paper application, click ‘Elementary School’ and ‘Apply.’

**What kind of elementary schools can I apply to through GoCPS?**

You can apply to magnet, magnet cluster, and open enrollment schools (Choice Schools), which select students through a computerized lottery, and you can apply to Selective Enrollment Schools, which select students through a testing process.

Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools consist of five programs: Academic Centers, Classical Schools, Regional Gifted Centers, and Regional Gifted Center for English Learners.

If you want to apply to charter elementary schools, you will need to directly contact the school(s) in which you are interested.

**If I submit an online application, how will I know that it was received?**

You will receive an email and/or text confirmation, depending on the type of communication method you selected on your online account.

**If I mail a paper application, how will I know that it was received?**

If you mail your applications, we strongly recommend that you:

1. Send the applications via certified mail so that you will have a receipt;
2. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard, which will be mailed back to you as a receipt once your applications are received; and
3. Mail your applications in plenty of time to ensure that they are received by the Office of Access and Enrollment on or before the application deadline.

If you do not have a receipt and your applications do not reach our office, your child will not be considered for any of the schools to which you applied. Applications received after the application deadline cannot be processed.
Do you have to live in Chicago to attend these schools?

Yes, you have to live in Chicago to enroll and attend magnet, magnet cluster, open enrollment, and Selective Enrollment schools. You don't have to live in Chicago to apply, participate in the computerized lottery selection or testing process, and even be selected, but you have to provide proof of city of Chicago residency by July 1, 2020, in order to enroll for the 2020-2021 school year.

What does “primary address” mean?

When you fill out your child's application -- whether online or paper -- you must indicate your child's "primary address." The primary address is defined as your child’s regular, fixed nighttime residence. Note that you must use the address that is your primary address at the time that you apply. You cannot apply using an address where you plan to live after the application deadline.

I share joint custody with my child's mother/father. Whose address should I use?

If you share joint custody and your child sleeps at night at only one residence the majority of the time, that is the child's primary address, and that is the address that must be entered on the application. In cases of joint custody where a child's residence is equally divided between two addresses, either address may be used. Note that the address of only ONE parent can be used; your child cannot be considered for schools by using more than one address, and your child cannot submit applications with different addresses. The address that is used for the application and selection process must be the same, single address. If your child submits applications with more than one address, he/she will be considered for the selection process using the address on the first application that is processed by the Office of Access and Enrollment.

Is transportation provided?

In most cases, school bus transportation is provided to K-8 students attending elementary magnet schools who live more than 1.5 miles but less than 6 miles from the school. Students attending Disney II, Drummond, LaSalle II, and Mayer do not receive busing. However, with the exception of Drummond, Student Transportation Services provides Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) fare cards or travel reimbursements for parents and guardians of students at these schools who qualify for transportation. Transportation is not provided for preschool students.

School bus transportation is provided to K-8 students attending Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools, within specified parameters:

Regional Gifted Centers: Transportation is provided to Regional Gifted Center student who reside more than 1.5 miles from the school. In addition, for the following Regional Gifted Centers, students must live at least 1.5 miles from the school and within the identified transportation ranges:

- Carnegie: 3900 South and 7500 South, from Lake Shore Drive to the west city limits
- Coonley: 900 North and the North city limits, from Lake Shore Drive to the west city limits
- National Teachers Academy: 500 South and 5900 South, from Lake Shore Drive to Cicero
- South Loop: 400 North and 3900 South, from Lake Shore Drive to the west city limits

Classical School transportation service: Transportation is provided to Classical School students who reside more than 1.5 miles from the school and within the boundaries identified below:

- Bronzeville: from 22nd Street to 71st Street
- Decatur: from North City Limits to Fullerton Avenue (2400 North)
- McDade: from Pershing Road (3900 South) to 106th St. South
- Poe: from 71st St. South to South city limits
- Skinner North: from Foster Ave. (5200 North) to Cermak Road (2200 South)
- Skinner West: from Fullerton Ave. (2400 North) to Pershing Road (3900 South)
- Sor Juana: from 22nd Street to 71st Street

Academic Centers and International Gifted Programs: Transportation is provided to students who live more than 1.5 miles from the school. Students must get to a designated pick-up location.

Transportation is provided to students with disabilities if the IEP or 504 Plan requires it; for information, contact the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services at (773) 553-1800. Transportation may also be provided to homeless students upon enrollment; for information, contact the Office of Educational Support for Students in Temporary Living Situations at (773) 553-2242.

**What should I do if I move after I submit my application?**

If you apply online, you can make updates via the online application site to your address and telephone number. If you apply via paper application, contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2060 or gocps@cps.edu to request a paper Contact Information Modification Form. For the purposes of determining tiers, attendance/overlay boundaries, and proximity boundaries, address changes must be submitted no later than December 13, 2019. NOTE: If you change your address and you accept an offer from a school, you will be required to provide proof of both the address on the application, and the new address, at the time of your child’s registration.

**How can I correct other information on my child’s application?**

To correct your child’s CPS ID number, IEP/504 Plan status, current grade, or other student-related information, you will need to submit a paper Student Information Modification Form, whether you apply online or via paper application. To request the Student Information Modification Form, contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2060 or gocps@cps.edu. Corrections must be submitted no later than December 13, 2019.

**How can I change my school choices?**

We encourage you to attend Open Houses and conduct any other school-related research BEFORE submitting your application, to decrease the need for changing school choices. If you wish to make changes to your school choices, you will need to do so by the December 13, 2019, deadline. If you apply online, you can make changes by deleting your application and submitting a new one. If you apply via paper application, contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2060 or oae@cps.edu to request a paper Application Modification Form.

If you wish to re-rank your Selective Enrollment Elementary School choices after the December 13, 2019, deadline, you must do so no later than February 3, 2020. (Note that you cannot add new school choices to your application after December 13, 2019.) Please contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2060 or gocps@cps.edu for re-ranking instructions.
CUSTODY AND GoCPS ACCOUNT QUESTIONS

Can two GoCPS accounts be created for one student?

No, only one GoCPS account will be authorized for a student. Students cannot be attached to multiple GoCPS accounts. The only way for both parents to have access to make application and results decisions, and view notification letters, which includes student scores, is to share the login information.

Can both parents be the primary parent/guardian on a GoCPS account?

No. The GoCPS application system only allows for one parent/guardian to be listed as “primary,” but does allow for additional parents/guardians to be added to the account.

What does it mean to add another parent or guardian to a GoCPS account?

Contacts who are added to the GoCPS account after the account is opened by the primary parent/guardian will receive automated messages of application submission and admissions screening. At this time, the GoCPS system does not have the capacity to share the results decisions or notification letters with the contacts who added to the account.

I am separated from my child’s other parent. Can either one of us open a GoCPS account?

No. Only one parent can open a GoCPS account. We recommend that the GoCPS applications be opened by the student’s primary parent/guardian. If a student’s parents are separated and there is a dispute over which parent is the primary parent/guardian, or who should have primary access to the GoCPS application file, CPS must receive a parental agreement which indicates the parent who has educational decision-making authority, or the parents must go to court to obtain this documentation. If the court document indicates that parents have joint educational decision-making, parents must share the GoCPS login.

What happens when parents disagree about how to use the GoCPS account?

In the case of a student’s parents not agreeing about how to use the GoCPS account, the parents will need to provide us with a court order that states which parent has the educational decision making authority so that we can determine who should have primary access to the GoCPS application file.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION: CHOICE SCHOOLS

How do I apply to magnet, magnet cluster and open enrollment schools (Choice Schools)?

You can apply to Choice Schools via the online application site or via paper application. Identify the schools to which you want to apply and submit your application between September 30, 2019, and December 13, 2019. Students are selected via computerized lottery.

To how many schools can I apply?

You can apply to up to 20 magnet, magnet cluster and/or open enrollment schools.
Can I list the schools in order of preference?

No. Magnet, magnet cluster and open enrollment schools are considered equally in separate lotteries. They are not ranked in any kind of order. As a result, it is possible for your child to receive an offer from more than one school.

Do I have to apply for the maximum number of schools?

No. You should apply only to those schools where you would accept an offer.

I want to apply to more than 20 schools. Can I submit a second application?

No. The maximum number of elementary magnet, magnet cluster and elementary open enrollment schools to which you can apply is 20. You cannot submit a second application in order to apply to additional schools.

What is a computerized lottery?

Computerized lotteries are conducted to ensure that all children have an equal chance to be accepted at schools that do not require testing. Your child will be included in the computerized lottery in a specific category (also known as a queue): sibling, staff preference, proximity, tier, or general. Based on your child’s category and the number of seats allocated for that category at the school to which you are applying, the computerized lottery will randomly select students to fill the available seats. The remaining students are randomly assigned a waitlist number in that category, starting with number 1.

There are four types of lotteries:

- Sibling lottery: conducted only for students who have a brother or sister in the same household, who already attends the school to which the student is applying, and who will still be enrolled in that school in the 2019-2020 school year. In addition, the currently enrolled sibling’s current grade must be kindergarten or higher.

- Staff preference lottery: conducted only for students applying to the entry-grade level at a school where their parent or guardian is a member of the staff. Note that these seats are based on space availability after siblings are accommodated. (More on this process can be found in the following question.)

- Proximity lottery (for magnet schools only): conducted for students applying to the entry-grade level who live within a 1.5-mile radius of the school.

- Tier/General lottery: conducted for all students not included in the sibling, staff preference, or proximity lotteries. For the entry-grade level only, the general lottery seats are divided evenly among the four socio-economic tiers.

I am employed at a CPS school and would like my child to attend my school. Does my child have preference in the selection process?

For Choice Elementary Schools and all district high schools that select students through a computerized lottery, two seats will be allocated at the entry level grade for children of teachers or staff members currently employed at that school. (Note that employees must be staffed at a school in order to apply for staff preference for that school.) If there are more than two children who qualify and apply for these seats, a lottery will be held and seats will be filled by computerized lottery. (The availability of these seats is based on space.) For the purposes of this
policy, the term "children" means natural children, stepchildren, foster children and adopted children, as evidenced by documentation required by the CEO or designee. If there are minimum criteria for a school, the student must meet eligibility requirements in order to qualify.

**Can my child be selected for more than one Choice School?**

The selections for magnet, magnet cluster, and open enrollment schools are conducted independently from each other. Therefore, your child can be selected for any number of schools, depending on the number of schools to which you apply. Your child could be selected for no schools and placed on the waitlist for all of your choices; he/she could be selected for some schools and on the waitlist for the others; or he/she could be selected for all of the schools to which you apply.

**How does the waitlist work?**

After the available spaces in each grade are filled through the computerized lottery, waitlist numbers are randomly assigned, beginning with number 1, to the remaining students in each category. Parents of students who are selected in the lottery are given approximately three weeks to accept an offer. After the deadline for accepting an offer, principals must fill any remaining spaces through the waiting list, beginning with number 1 and selecting students based on their category. For example, if a student was selected in the proximity lottery and the parent does not accept the space, the school will contact the parent of the first student on the proximity waiting list for that grade to offer him/her the available space. If this student declines the offer, the principal will contact the second student on the proximity waiting list for that grade, and so on. Schools are not allowed to contact students outside of the waiting list order, and offers must be made to replace students in the same category. For instance, a school cannot offer a space to the student who is number 1 on a waiting list and then skip the next five students to offer a space to the student who is number 6 on the list. As another example, a school cannot attempt to fill a space declined by a student from the sibling category by offering the space to a student on the general waiting list, unless the sibling waitlist has been exhausted. (Note that when parents of waitlisted students are contacted, they will be given 48 business hours to accept or decline a seat. Be sure to include at least one telephone number on your application where you can be reached at all times.)

NOTE: If your child is currently on a waitlist from last year’s application process, and has not received an offer for the current school year, you will need to reapply this fall for the 2020-2021 school year if you want to be considered for that year. Waitlists expire in February and are not maintained from year to year.

**When will I find out if my child has been accepted?**

Notification letters will be released in April 2020. If you apply using the online application site, you will be able to access your results via your online application account. If you apply using a paper application, your notification letter will be sent to your home address via U.S. mail.

**If my child receives an offer from School A, and is on the waitlist for other schools, will she be removed from the waitlists if I accept the offer from School A?**

No. Accepting an offer from a school where your child is selected does not affect your child’s status on the waitlists at any other magnet, magnet cluster, or open enrollment schools. You can accept an offer that you received and, if you later receive an offer from a school where your child
was waitlisted, you may accept that offer instead, if you wish. In addition, accepting an offer from a magnet, magnet cluster, or open enrollment school does not affect your child’s status in the applicant pool for the Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools selection process. Should you choose to accept a later offer, you will be responsible for notifying the first school of your child’s change in status.

My child is currently enrolled in a preschool program at a Chicago public school. Do I have to submit an application for kindergarten, or will my child be automatically accepted for the kindergarten class?

Only four magnet schools – Drummond, Inter-American, Mayer, and Suder – have preschool programs that feed into the kindergarten class. (This will not apply to Mayer after the current school year.) This means that preschool students at these schools do not have to submit an application for a seat in kindergarten. If your child is in a preschool program at any other Chicago public school, you will need to submit a GoCPS application if you want your child to be considered for kindergarten.

My child is currently enrolled in a magnet school. I would like for him to attend a different magnet school. How can I transfer him to the other school?

In order for your child to be considered for a different magnet school, you will have to submit an application, during the application period, and your child will have to participate in the selection process for the school in which you are interested. You cannot transfer your child without participating in the application process.

Can students with disabilities apply to magnet schools and programs?

All students with disabilities are eligible to apply to magnet schools and programs. Appropriate services within these programs will be provided to meet the student’s individual needs as delineated on the Individualized Education Program (IEP). If a student with a mobility impairment is selected by lottery for a magnet school or program that is not accessible, transportation will be provided to a comparable magnet program at an accessible school.

Do I have to submit my child’s IEP/504 Plan/Service Plan with their application?

Information from a child’s IEP, 504 Plan, or Service Plan is only needed if you are applying for the Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools. If your child attends a Chicago public, charter, or contract school, CPS will obtain their IEP or 504 Plan from the CPS Student Information System. CPS can also access the IEPs/504 Plans of non-CPS students who have had their IEP/504 Plans developed by the Chicago Public Schools.

If your child attends a non-CPS school, and their IEP or 504 Plan was developed by a public school system outside of Chicago, please submit the most recent version of your child’s IEP or 504 Plan to the Office of Access and Enrollment at asjeffers@cps.edu. If your non-CPS student has an IEP or 504 Plan that was not developed by a public school system, or if your child has a Service Plan, your child’s documentation will be reviewed by the testing team to determine if it meets CPS guidelines for acceptance. Please submit the most recent version of your child’s documentation to the Office of Access and Enrollment at asjeffers@cps.edu.

Can English Learners (ELs) apply to magnet schools and programs?

Yes. All ELs are eligible to apply to magnet schools and programs.
**Does my child have to take a test to get into these schools?**

No. Elementary magnet, magnet cluster and open enrollment schools are designed for all students, and students are randomly selected through a computerized lottery. No testing is required.

**I am applying for my son to a magnet school where his sister is enrolled. Will my son automatically be selected?**

Sibling applicants to elementary magnet, magnet cluster, or elementary open enrollment schools will be offered seats to the extent that space is available. If a school receives more applications from siblings than there are seats available, a computerized lottery will be conducted to fill the seats. In order to be eligible, the enrolled sibling and the sibling applicant must live in the same household and must be attending the same school for the 2020-2021 school year. (The term “sibling” means natural siblings, step siblings, foster siblings and adopted siblings.) Your child cannot be considered as a sibling in the selection process if the enrolled sibling is currently in a Chicago Early Learning or tuition-based prekindergarten, or if the enrolled sibling graduates or transfers to another school. If the enrolled sibling graduates or transfers to another school, your child’s offer will be rescinded and he/she will be placed in the general applicant queue. If you do not submit an application, or if you do not provide identifying sibling information on your child’s application, your child will not be given sibling preference in the selection process.

**I have twins. Can they be selected to attend school together?**

For applications to magnet, magnet cluster, or open enrollment schools, parents of twins, triplets and other higher order multiple births have the option of linking their applications together so that the students are either admitted together or placed next to each other on the waitlist. If you choose not to indicate on the application that your children are multiples, their applications will be independently processed in the lottery and their applications will not be linked. (The admission policy adopts the traditional meaning of twins and multiples, meaning siblings produced in the same pregnancy. Under this policy, the terms twins and multiples do not include siblings adopted during the same year, adopted siblings born during the same 12-month period, biological siblings born during the same 12-month period, or any other circumstance in which siblings are close in age.) Twins, triplets, and other multiples do not have preference or consideration when applying to Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools.

**What options do I have if my child doesn’t get an offer?**

The Office of Access and Enrollment offers a second-round application process in May for Choice Schools that still have seats available. Contact the Office of Access and Enrollment in May, or visit go.cps.edu for more information. In addition, your child could receive an offer from a school where he/she has been waitlisted.

**APPLICATION AND SELECTION: SELECTIVE ENROLLMENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

**What types of schools accept the Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools application?**

The Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools application is used to apply to Academic Centers, Classical Schools, Regional Gifted Centers, and Regional Gifted Centers for English Learners.
How do I apply to Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools?

You can apply via the online application site or via paper application. Identify the schools to which you want to apply and submit your application between September 30, 2019, and December 13, 2019. Testing is required. Students applying to kindergarten through fourth grade are tested as long as they are age-appropriate for the grade to which they are applying. Students applying to grades 5-8 must pre-qualify for the admissions exam(s) based on NWEA MAP scores in reading and math.

Which NWEA MAP scores are used for the 2020-2021 application process?

For CPS students applying to grades 5-9 for the 2020-2021 school year to schools/programs with academic criteria, we use the NWEA MAP scores from spring 2019. If the CPS student did not take the spring 2019 NWEA MAP, he/she will be tested during the first possible testing window at his/her school in the 2019-2020 school year, and these are the scores that will be used for the application process. For non-CPS students applying to grades 5-9 for the 2020-2021 school year to schools/programs with academic criteria, we use the scores from the NWEA MAP administered by CPS in September 2019 or October 2019, or January 2020 if the student missed the registration date for the September or October exams.

How many Selective Enrollment admissions exams can my child take?

There are three types of Selective Enrollment exams: one test for the Academic Centers and Regional Gifted Centers; one test for the Classical Schools; and one test for the Regional Gifted Centers for English Learners. The number of tests your child takes depends on the programs to which you apply.

How do I have my child tested?

If you apply using the online application site, you will schedule your child’s admissions exam(s) yourself. If you apply using a paper application, the Office of Access and Enrollment will schedule your child’s admissions exam(s) after your application is received, and notify you of the date, time and location.

What content is contained on the SEES admissions test?

The test for the Classical Schools program is an achievement skills test that assesses the student’s reading and mathematics abilities. (Calculators are not permissible unless noted otherwise through an IEP or 504 Plan.) The test for the Academic Centers and Regional Gifted Centers measures critical thinking skills, reasoning, problem solving, and mental control. Mental control is the ability to hold information in the short-term memory while performing a mental operation.

Can my child take the admissions exams more than once?

No. Once your child has been exposed to the admissions exam, he/she cannot take the exam again for the coming school year. Retesting is typically only considered if, at the time of testing, the student had a public school IEP or 504 Plan that identified allowable district assessment standard accommodations, which were required to measure the academic achievement and functional performance relevant to a subject area on the admissions exam, and these accommodations were not provided to the candidate.
When will I receive my child’s test results?

Students who apply for kindergarten, and take the test before November 22, 2019, will receive their test results prior to the December 13th application deadline. Applicants to all other grades, and kindergarten applicants who test after November 22, 2019, will receive their test results with the application results that are released in April 2020, which will also inform you whether your child received an offer from any of the schools to which you applied.

My child is currently enrolled in a Selective Enrollment Elementary School. I would like for him to attend a different Selective Enrollment School. How can I transfer him to the other school?

In order for your child to be considered for a different selective enrollment school or program, you will have to submit an application, during the application period, and your child will have to participate in the testing process for the school in which you are interested. You cannot transfer your child to another Selective Enrollment Elementary School without participating in the application and selection process.

My child attends a non-CPS school, and is not applying for a Selective Enrollment school for the 2020-2021 school year, but I would like to have her take the NWEA MAP this year so she can become familiar with the test. Can I do this?

No. Regretfully, the Chicago Public Schools does not have the financial or personnel resources, or the physical capacity, to test students who are not planning to apply for the upcoming school year.

Are students with disabilities required to meet entrance test requirements for enrollment?

Students with disabilities are required to take entrance tests at schools that require them unless the student is placed by the Office of Special Education and Supports into a low incidence program at the school. Applicable test accommodations described in Section 10 (c) of the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan will be made available. For example, if a child has a fine motor impairment and cannot fill in the bubbles on the answer sheet, and their IEP requires that a scribe assist with completing the answer sheet, a person will be provided during the entrance exam to scribe for them. The goal is always to measure the student’s knowledge or ability, and not the disability. However, to be considered for any program for academically advanced students, all applicants need to earn a score that demonstrates they can compete and succeed in an accelerated program. Depending on the applicant pool, some students with disabilities may be accepted with lower test scores than general education students. However, no student will be admitted whose score is not representative of a student who can succeed in an advanced environment.

If my child is not selected, is it possible for her to be selected later?

Yes. After the seats at each school are filled, the eligible non-selected students will remain in an applicant pool. This is not a traditional waiting list, where students are assigned numbers – students are ranked by score in the applicant pool. Eligible students who decline an offer or do not receive an offer will remain in the applicant pool and can possibly receive an offer in a later selection round. Selection rounds continue as necessary until the 20th day of school.

I am applying for my son to a Selective Enrollment Elementary School where his sister is enrolled. Will my son automatically be admitted?
No. There is no sibling preference or consideration for applicants to schools that require testing.

**Where can I find cutoff scores?**

Cutoff scores for Academic Centers for the 2020-2021 school year will be posted on go.cps.edu under ‘Resources,’ shortly after the notifications are released in April 2020. We do not post cutoff scores for Classical Schools and Regional Gifted Centers, as posting these scores could potentially result in breach of privacy of the selected students, given the relatively low number of seats available. In addition, because these schools typically have multiple selection rounds, the cutoff scores fluctuate through the selection process.

**If I accept an offer from a Selective Enrollment Elementary School, can my child be selected for another Selective Enrollment Elementary School later?**

No. If you accept an offer from any Selective Enrollment Elementary School, your child will be removed from the applicant pool for all Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools.

**RESULTS**

**When will I find out if my child has been accepted??**

Results will be released in April 2020. If you apply online, you will receive your results via your online account. If you apply via paper application, your results will be mailed to your home address. In addition, your results will be posted on the online account that will be opened on your behalf by the Office of Access and Enrollment.

**How can I accept an offer?**

If you apply online, you can accept your offer via your online account. If you apply via paper application, you will accept magnet, magnet cluster or open enrollment school offers by submitting a Confirmation Form to the Office of Access and Enrollment, or you can accept offers via the online account that will be opened on your behalf by the Office of Access and Enrollment.