

2019-20 School Choice - Frequently Asked Questions

Parents: Please note that this document will be updated as questions are continuously received and deemed useful to this process. Content within this FAQ is subject to change.

1. What is School Choice?

Each school-aged child in Charleston County is assigned to a neighborhood school based on grade level and home address. In addition, CCSD offers specialized programs, magnets, and charter schools to which students can apply.

2. Which schools in Charleston County are choice schools?

[Visit our School Choice page](#) for a list of CCSD's choice schools.

3. Who can apply for a choice school?

All students residing in Charleston County are eligible to apply. Out-of-county residents are required to pay tuition. Residency verification is due by June 28, 2019.

4. What is a Neighborhood School?

This is a school where students are assigned to attend because they live in the school's attendance area or attendance zone. A student's neighborhood school is also referred to as their "home school." ([Use our GIS Lookup Tool to check your attendance zone.](#))

5. What is a [Countywide Admissions Magnet](#)?

This is a school that has a specific focus. All students in Charleston County are eligible to apply; however, there are specific criteria that must be met for admission. All of the students at a countywide admissions magnet school are magnet students.

There are four countywide admissions magnet schools: Academic Magnet High School, Burke AP Academy, Charleston County School of the Arts, and Buist Academy.

6. What is a [Countywide Magnet \(non-admissions criteria\)](#)?

This is a school that has a specific focus or theme. All students in Charleston County are eligible to apply. There are four countywide magnet schools: Burke Lowcountry Tech Academy, Charleston Progressive Academy, Garrett Academy for Technology, and Military Magnet Academy.

7. What is a Constituent Magnet?

This is a school with a theme or focus which has a designated attendance zone matching the CCSD Constituent zones in which it resides. Only students who reside in the designated constituent district of the school can attend the school. Constituent magnets are completely filled via the School Choice application process. Ashley River Creative Arts and Montessori Community School of Charleston are the only constituent magnet schools at this time.

8. What is a Partial Magnet?

A partial magnet is a school that has a theme or focus and a defined constituent attendance zone. In addition, a specific number of seats are allocated to students who live outside the attendance zone.

9. What is a Montessori School?

A Montessori school practices a very specific educational model. The Montessori model was developed in Italy in the early 1900's. It is a child-centered educational approach in which students work with specially designed materials, and it facilitates the student organizing his/her thinking and applying knowledge to real-world experiences. **Visit our Montessori page** to learn more about the benefits of the Montessori model and which schools in Charleston County participate in this instructional model.

10. What are charter schools?

According to the South Carolina Department of Education and the South Carolina Charter Schools Act of 1996, a charter school is defined as a public, nonreligious, non home-based, nonprofit corporation forming a school that operates by sponsorship of a public school district, the South Carolina Public Charter School District, or a public or independent institution of higher learning, but is accountable to the board of trustees, or in the case of technical colleges, the area commission, of the sponsor which grants its charter. All students residing in Charleston County are eligible to apply to a charter school. All students residing in Charleston County are eligible to apply. The following charter schools participate in the CCSD application process: Allegro Charter School of Music, Carolina Voyager Charter, Greg Mathis Charter High School, Orange Grove Charter, East Cooper Montessori Charter, and James Island Charter High School.

11. How do I apply for a charter school that is not currently using the CCSD online application?

Please **visit the website** of the charter school in which you are interested to learn more about their individual application processes.

12. Can I apply to a Choice school if I do not currently live in Charleston County?

Yes, students may apply for magnet/choice school opportunities; however, it is required that property within Charleston County is owned in the student's name with a tax assessed value of \$300.00 or more and a tuition is charged.

Families not currently living in Charleston County but with intent to move to Charleston County may apply during the application window (February 11, 2019- March 11, 2019). Applicants must provide proof of Charleston County residency by June 28, 2019.

13. How do I know if a choice school is a good fit for my student?

It is important that parents explore the options offered by their neighborhood schools as a first step, before submitting an application to one or more choice schools. Likewise, it is critical that parents understand the focus or theme of the choice school and how it is implemented in the school. Parents must consider information such as the limitations of transportation provided to choice schools and the grade levels served by choice schools.

14. How do I apply to a choice school for my student?

The online application is easy to complete and can be accessed from the CCSD website. For assistance, call the CCSD School Choice Office (843) 937-6582, call the school for which you are applying, or attend the School Choice Fair in your area. If a paper application is preferred, the paper application may be printed from the district website or can be picked up at one of eight designated schools. Please refer to the CCSD School Choice website for the list of designated application receiving schools. All applications submitted during the designated application window will receive equal consideration regardless of the date they are submitted or the method of application.

15. How do I find my student's CCSD ID number?

If you have a student already attending a CCSD school, you can access your student's ID number by signing onto **Parent Portal**. This also provides you access to your student's grades, attendance and discipline. You will be asked for the student ID number at the beginning of the application process.

16. How do I know if my online application is completed and submitted?

Online applications are not completed, submitted and eligible for acceptance until all the required fields (marked with a red * in your online application) have been completed and you click on the "Submit My Application" button on the final step of the application. You will receive an email confirming that your application was submitted as well as a message on the screen. Receipt of this confirmation email is the final step in the CCSD School Choice application process.

17. When a paper application is submitted, how will it be processed in the School Choice Lottery ? All applicants (online and paper applications) will receive a follow-up confirmation communication in one of two ways: an immediate confirmation email after an online application is submitted OR a delayed confirmation email (up to a 7-Day delay) after the paper application is submitted. These additional days for processing the paper application are needed for the applicant's information to be manually transferred into the online system by a trained CCSD employee. Entering all applications in the same system will ensure students have equitable opportunity for consideration in the general lottery process. Once the application is entered, applicants should receive an automatic email. Please note: The CCSD School Choice application process does not give "first come, first served" priority.

18. Where do I go for help completing an application?

CCSD will work with applicants to submit an application for each choice school for which they wish to be considered. Interested students and parents/guardians should consider attending one of the four School Choice Fairs scheduled to be held simultaneously on February 23, 2019, (see the School Choice website for fair locations and times) or the Parent Assistance Night scheduled in your area for assistance (see website for application event dates, locations and times). Spanish translation will be available at these events. If you are unable to attend one of these events, please call the CCSD School Choice Office (843) 937-6582, or contact your current school counselor for additional assistance. Incomplete applications will not be able to be processed until all information is received.

19. What if I do not have access to a computer, mobile device or the internet, and cannot come to the Choice Fair or one of the Parent Assistance Nights? Is there a paper application available?

The preferred application method is using the online option because the application is immediately processed; however, using either online or paper application does not provide an advantage for consideration for admission. Paper applications will be available on February 11, 2019, to be printed from the district website, available for pickup at any one of the eight designated CCSD application receiving sites or through your school's guidance counselor.

Please note that the school choice application process (online or paper submission) does not give first come, first served priority to applicants. All online applications and paper applications must be received by the deadline of March 11, 2019. Paper applications must be turned in to one of eight designated receiving sites.

20. Does the order in which I list the schools impact my applications? (Rank Ordering)

The order in which you choose the schools in the application indicates your first to last preference.

Please Note that the ranking of schools does not apply to the following schools: Academic Magnet HS, Buist Academy, Burke AP Academy, Early College HS, Charleston County School of the Arts, or Orange Grove Charter. If you are applying to any of these, it is suggested that they are listed last in your choice order.

21. Can I change the order of my schools selected after I started or submitted my application?

Yes, the simplest place to do that is from your dashboard by using the green arrows shown to move a school to a higher or lower position in your list. This is possible while applications are open.

22. How does the lottery work?

Applications completed and submitted are first reviewed by school administrators and determined if eligible for lottery.

There are different lottery categories depending on the choice school. Lottery implementation may include any of the following formats, depending upon the specific choice school:

- Fully randomized,
- Used for placement based on audition or rubric results, or
- Randomized based on priorities.

The results of a lottery run is an Accepted List and a Waiting List per grade for the particular choice school and based on the number of seats available per grade. All lotteries are run at the district office level using the Smart Choice system and results are disbursed to parents through that system by way of email and the parent dashboard.

23. What is the process for accepting or declining a seat at a choice school?

Notifications of acceptance will be sent to the email address used when submitting the application.

Applicants are only able to accept one (1) seat offer. Students cannot accept seat offers from multiple schools. In accepting a seat, applicants are confirming their decision regarding school choice for the 2019-2020 school year and relinquishing all other seat offers from magnet schools included in their application. Your position on the waiting list of any other schools that you applied for will be released upon accepting a seat.

24. What should I know about waiting lists?

If your student was NOT offered a seat but received a number in the lottery that is 150 or less, and is on a waiting list at a school, your student will remain on the waiting list unless another

CCSD magnet school seat is accepted. The online application system's dashboard allows families to see their placement on waiting lists.

Waiting lists for all magnet schools will be capped at 150 students each. All waiting lists will remain in effect for the 2019-2020 school year. They do not roll over from year-to-year, and a new application must be submitted.

25. What is the application period for the 2019-2020 school year?

Please refer to the Important Dates section on our [Choice page](#) for the complete schedule of important dates.

Remember that all applications will be given the same consideration regardless of when they are submitted during the application period, however applications cannot be submitted once the window closes.

Parents are allowed to choose up to five (5) school choice options in the application.

26. Will there be an opportunity to visit with the Principal(s) of CCSD choice schools? Is CCSD holding a Choice Fair this year?

Yes, on February 23, 2019 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm , the CCSD Choice Fairs will be held at various locations. All choice schools will be present to share information about their schools and provide parents an opportunity to meet the principal and other staff members.

Coming Soon! Please see the [CCSD School Choice page](#) for a listing of which schools will be present at each Fair location.

Computers will be open at the schools during the Choice Fair so that parents can complete the online application onsite. Spanish translation assistance will be available at the Choice Fair sites.

27. Do choice schools offer school tours?

Yes, many schools are currently offering tours and open house opportunities. Please visit the websites of the schools that interest you to access information, dates and times, and to learn how to schedule tours.

28. If my student is already in a magnet/choice school, do I need to re-apply for the coming school year?

Once approved, a student no longer needs to re-apply each year for that school and program. The student may remain enrolled until completing the grades offered at that school.

Please Note: If a Constituent District rezoning causes a student to be assigned to another “home school”, he/she must then apply to remain at the partial magnet school he/she had been attending.

29. Is transportation provided to magnet/choice schools?

Transportation to a CCSD magnet/choice school is provided from centralized bus stops. This is not the same pick up process as for students attending their "home" attendance zone school.

- CCSD does not transport students younger than 4 years old.
- Centralized locations are used for magnet/choice school bus stops and could be as far as five miles from your home in commercial or unsupervised areas within the designated constituent district. (See chart below.)
- These are parent assisted bus stops and are not intended to be stops to which most students can walk or be left unattended.
- For most efficient routing, riders may be pooled with a wide range of age groups on the same bus.

This should be considered when submitting an application for a magnet school. Detailed information regarding specific routes will be available near the beginning of school when routes are developed. Also please note, charter schools handle their own transportation and you should contact them directly if you are applying for a charter school and have questions related to transportation.

Geographic Area in Which Magnet Transportation is Provided	School Name		
	Elementary	Middle	High School
Countywide Transportation Provided	Buist Academy Charleston Progressive Academy		Academic Magnet High Charleston SOA Early College High Garrett Academy of Tech Military Magnet Academy
Constituent District 2 Mt. Pleasant	Sullivan's Island ES James B. Edwards Jennie Moore	Laing MS	

Constituent District 3 James Island, Charleston	Murray-LaSaine Montessori		
Constituent District 4 North Charleston, Ladson	Malcolm C. Hursey Montessori North Charleston Creative Arts	Zucker MS	
Constituent District 9 John's Island, Wadmalaw Island	Frierson Montessori Murray LaSaine Montessori	Haut Gap MS	
Constituent District 10 West Ashley	Montessori Community School Ashley River Creative Arts St. Andrew's Math & Science	C.E. Williams MS West Ashley Advanced Studies	
Constituent District 20 Downtown Charleston	Charleston Progressive Academy Memminger IB World School Mitchell Math & Science James Simons Montessori		Burke - AP Lowcountry Tech Academy
Constituent District 23 Hollywood, Ravenel, Edisto Island	E.B. Ellington Advanced Studies Montessori Community School		

Transportation for Charter Schools

Transportation provided as the charter directs. Please visit each charter school's website for additional information.

Transportation for James Island Charter High School:

Per South Carolina Code of Laws and the James Island Charter High School By-Laws, James Island Charter High School is only required to transport students who are assigned to Attendance Zone 3, which is James Island and Folly Beach. Transportation for open enrollment students is the responsibility of the parents or guardians. However, as seating and funding are available, open enrollment students may have access to Magnet Bus Transportation based on a first come first served basis giving preference to students' grade level. There is a fee for this service. Please complete the Choice Bus Application Form via the following link: <https://goo.gl/forms/VWWluFyaJldZJteB2>

Transportation for Orange Grove Charter:

Transportation is provided for students who live in the school's original attendance zone. A map of the original zone and the current bus stops are listed on the school website at www.orangegrovecharter.com.

Transportation for East Cooper Montessori Charter:

Transportation is not provided for students attending East Cooper Montessori Charter School.

Transportation for Carolina Voyager Charter:

Transportation to and from Carolina Voyager is the responsibility of our parents. We regret that we are not able to provide bus transportation.

Transportation for Allegro Charter:

Transportation is not provided for students attending Allegro Charter School.

Transportation for Greg Mathis Charter HS:

Transportation to Greg Mathis Charter HS is arranged by the school. Please contact the school for more information.

30. Is there any consideration for siblings of students who already attend a choice school?

The School Choice application will collect information regarding siblings of currently attending students at choice schools. This information will be verified by the school and, when applicable, be prioritized within the lottery process.

Countywide admissions criteria magnets do not have sibling priorities. (However, Buist Academy does maintain a sibling waiting list that does not roll over from year to year and is capped at 150 students like other magnet schools.) All other Choice schools give priority to siblings as space is available. Families must submit applications for all siblings wishing to attend the Choice school.

31. If I am an active member of the military, can I apply to choice schools?

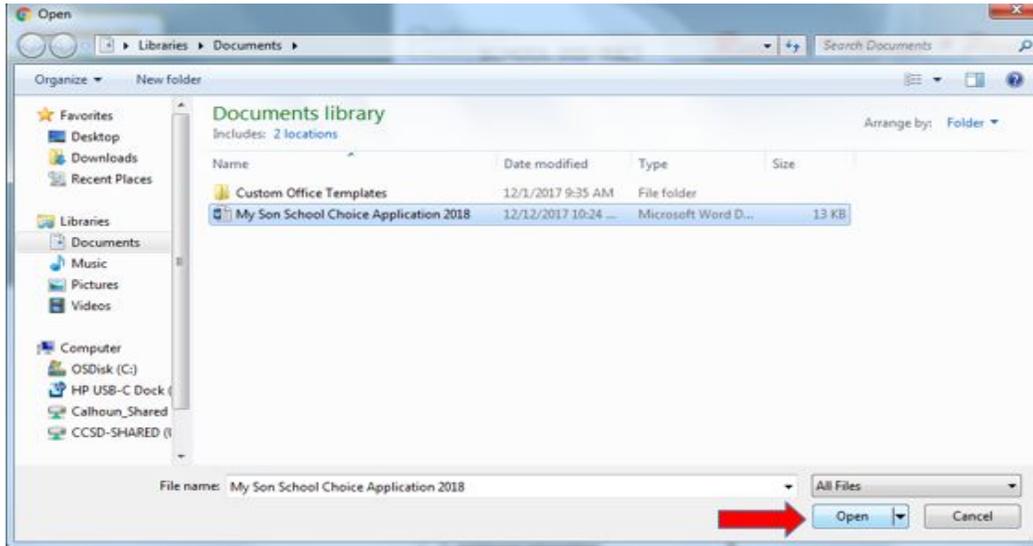
Yes, you may apply during the designated application window. If you arrive in Charleston and/or receive orders for Charleston after the application window closes you may still apply by using the **Military Family application** posted on the CCSD website. After the application window has closed, your application will be subject to choice school seat availability. Admissions criteria are applicable for Academic Magnet HS, Burke AP Academy, Buist Academy and Charleston County School of the Arts.

32. How do I upload or replace an uploaded document?

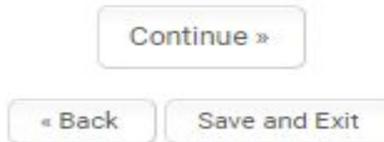
In the "Choose File" Click to open. This will give you the option to choose your file from the documents in your computer. If you are using your phone device, you can also UPLOAD documents from your download feature on your phone.



After you locate your document, click on “Open”.



After you have uploaded your document you can Click “Continue” or “Save and Exit” button if you have already submitted your Application and you are simply uploading the required documents. Your documents will automatically be saved to your “Application.”



NOTE: If you are “UPLOADING” documents while completing your “Application” they will not be submitted and eligible for acceptance until you return to the “Submit My Application” button on the final step.

Contact Us
School Choice Office
(843) 937-6582