

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.

2. Which schools in Charleston County are choice schools?

[Visit our 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 30, 2018.

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 three countywide admissions magnet schools: Academic Magnet High School, Charleston County School of the Arts, and Buist Academy.

6. What is a Countywide Magnet?

This is a school that has a specific focus or theme. All students in Charleston County are eligible to apply. There are five countywide magnet schools: Burke Advanced Studies Academy, 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. Constituent magnets do not have any seats guaranteed to a specific attendance zone, but are completely filled via the Choice application process. Ashley River Creative Arts, Community Montessori, and Ellington Advanced Studies 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?

A charter is a public school that operates with freedom from many of the local and state regulations that apply to traditional public schools. Charters typically have a focus or theme. All students residing in Charleston County are eligible to apply. All CCSD charter schools manage their own application processes, with the exception of Carolina Voyager Charter, Orange Grove Charter, East Cooper Montessori, and James Island Charter High School (who have adopted the CCSD timeline and online application process.)

11. How do I apply for a charter school?

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 is owned in their name with a tax assessed value of \$300.00 or more, within Charleston County, and a tuition will be charged.

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) 937-6406 or (843) 937-6582, call the school for which you are applying, or attend the School Choice Fair in your area. All applications submitted during the designated application window will receive equal consideration regardless of the date they are submitted.

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 application is completed and submitted?

Your application won't be completed, submitted and eligible for acceptance until all the required fields (marked with a red * in your 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.

17. What if I do not have access to a computer, mobile device or the internet, and cannot come to the Choice Fair? Is there a paper application?

CCSD will work with you to ensure that you are able to submit an application for each choice school for which you wish your student to be considered. Applications are only available online and through a mobile device. Please call the CCSD School Choice Office (843) 937-6406 or (843) 937-6582, the school for which you are applying or attend the School Choice Fair in your area for assistance. Unfortunately, incomplete or partial applications will not be able to be processed until all information is received.

18. What is the ranking (order) in which I select the schools?

The order in which you choose the school shows your first to fifth (of less if applied for fewer schools) interest in the choice school. However, **please note** that the ranking of schools does not apply to Countywide magnet schools and Orange Grove charter. This means that you

should choose the other schools that you apply as your first selections and leave Countywide or Orange Grove charter as your selections that follow, if you apply for any of these.

19. Can I change the order of my schools selected after I started 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.

20. 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.

Lotteries may be:

- Fully randomized

- May be used for placement based on audition or rubric results

- 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 central office level using the SmartChoice system and results are disbursed to parents through that system by way of email and the parent dashboard.

21. 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.

You are only able to accept one (1) seat offer. You cannot accept seat offers from multiple schools. In accepting a seat you are confirming your decision regarding school choice for the 2018-2019 school year and relinquishing all other seat offers from magnet schools included in your application. Your position on the waiting list of any other schools that you applied for will be released upon accepting a seat.

22. What 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 to which an application was submitted, your student will remain on the waiting list provided you have not accepted a seat at another CCSD magnet school. The online application system's Dashboard allows families to track their progress on waiting lists.

Waiting lists for all magnet schools will be capped at 150 students each and will not roll over from year to year. New applications must be submitted each year.

23. What is the application period for the 2018-2019 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.

24. 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 January 20, 2018, 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. Computer labs will be open at the schools during the Choice Fair so that parents can complete the online application on site. Bilingual assistance will be available at the Choice Fair sites.

25. Do choice schools offer school tours?

Yes. Many 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.

26. If my student does not get into a choice school, what must I do to reapply?

Once an account is established within the online application system, an application can be completed during the next open application period and submitted for consideration. Note that only some schools may have seats available during an additional application period.

27. 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 4yrs 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.
- IEP teams may determine transportation needs for students who may require additional provisions.
- 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					
Countywide Transportation Provided	Academic Magnet HS	Charleston School of the Arts	Buist Academy	Garrett Academy	Military Magnet Academy	Charleston Progressive Academy
Constituent District 2	Sullivan's Island ES	James B. Edwards ES	Laing MS			
Constituent District 3	Murray LaSaine Montessori					
Constituent District 4	Zucker MS	North Charleston Creative Arts				
Constituent District 9	Haut Gap MS	Murray LaSaine Montessori	Frierson Montessori			
Constituent District 10	Montessori Community School	CE Williams MS	Ashley River Creative Arts ES	St Andrews Math & Science ES	West Ashley Advanced Studies Program	
Constituent District 20	Burke HS	Charleston Progressive ES	Memminger ES	Mitchell Math & Science ES	James Simons Montessori	
Constituent District 23	Montessori Community School	EB Ellington Advanced Studies ES				

Transportation for Charter Schools

Transportation provided as charter directs

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.

28. Is there any consideration for siblings who already attend a choice school?

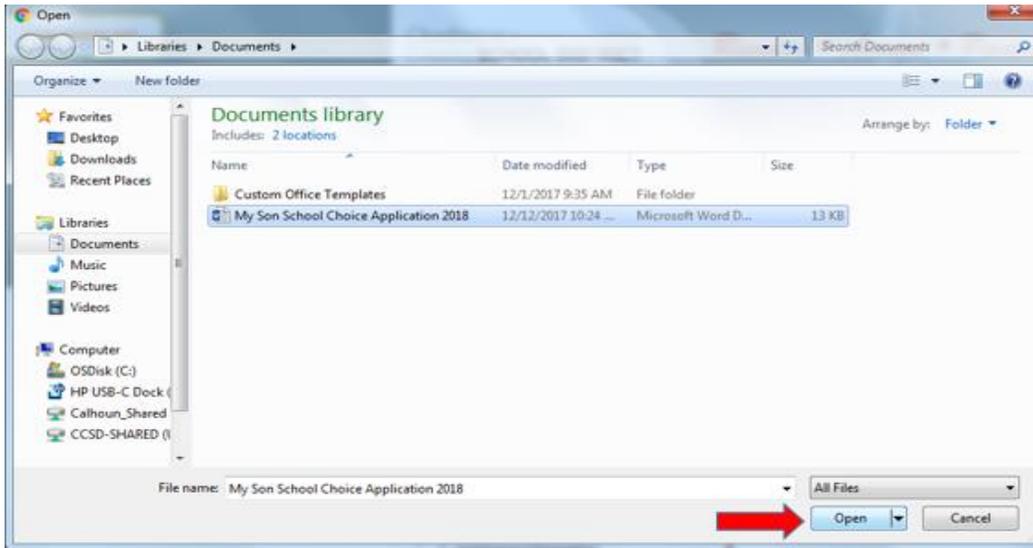
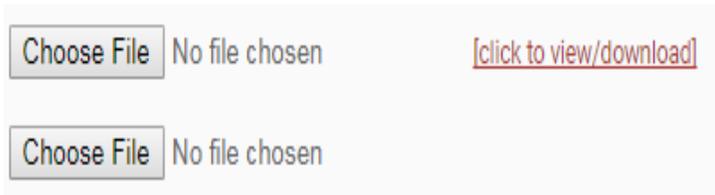
Countywide admissions criteria magnets and countywide magnet schools do not have sibling priorities. (However, Buist Academy does maintain a sibling waiting list that does not roll over from year to year and is capped at 150 students like other magnet schools.) All other Choice schools give priority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

29. 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. All admissions criteria are applicable for choice schools that have specific admissions criteria.

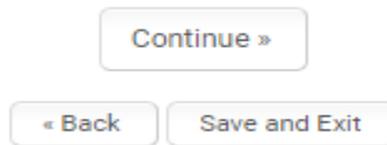
30. How do I upload or replace an uploaded document?

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 “Send My Application” button on the final step.

Contact Us

School Choice Office
(843) 937-6406 or (843) 937-6582