

Administrative Directive Title: Discovery School Application, Assessment, and Enrollment	AD Number: 4.205.1	Adopted: January 1999 Former Descriptor: STU6
Policy References: Board Policy 4.205 - Magnet Schools	Revised: 2/14; 7/14; 9/18; 1/24; 11/24; 11/25	

1 All students residing within the Murfreesboro City Schools (MCS) district can apply for
 2 enrollment at Discovery School, regardless of their school of zone. Students will be selected for
 3 enrollment based on assessment measures and qualifying scores determined by the school district
 4 based on the number of available spaces in each grade level.

5 **Application Process**

6 Applications are available annually on the school district’s website and must be submitted
 7 electronically. Technology and accommodations necessary to complete the application will be
 8 made available to individuals. If assistance is needed during the application process, contact the
 9 school principal.

10 The application requires additional school record documentation. Incomplete applications will not
 11 be accepted.

12 Applications are due February 1st. Late applications will not be accepted. Students moving into
 13 Murfreesboro City after the application deadline may apply on a rolling basis with proof of change
 14 of residence.

15 **Screening Assessment**

16 Each applicant will be required to submit to a screening that aligns to their rising grade level.
 17 Applicants who have been subject to grade retention by their school or homeschool program are
 18 not eligible for enrollment at Discovery School for that school year. Applicants who have been
 19 retained at the discretion of their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be screened at the grade level that aligns
 20 to their age/current grade without the grade retention. Rising Kindergarten students who are not
 21 subject to mandatory attendance laws at the time of screening may retest the following year if the
 22 applicant is not selected at the initial time of testing.

23 The screening assessment will be completed by Discovery School administrator, designee, and/or
 24 a gifted specialist. The screening instrument is a cognitive assessment that measures each of the
 25 following:

- 26 1. A measure of verbal skill that utilizes verbal tasks including oral directions, oral responses,
 27 and verbal prompts;
- 28 2. A measure of nonverbal skill that utilizes shapes and figures for students to invent
 29 strategies for solving nonverbal problems;
- 30 3. An academic measure that shows evidence of the skills necessary to be successful at
 31 Discovery School.

32 Given the screening structure in grades K-2, many students will be able to submit to the screening
33 without accommodations, as the pace of the screening can be varied and/or repeated, and language
34 translations of content can be made available. If additional accommodation is needed due to
35 physical disability (e.g., vision deficiency, blindness, deaf/hard of hearing), please contact the
36 school principal. For Grades 3-5, accommodations may be made to the screening assessment that
37 match a student’s active and current IEP or 504 plan and align with allowable accommodations
38 for State testing in Tennessee.

39 In exigent circumstances, such as illness or emergency, screening assessments may be rescheduled.
40 Failure to attend or complete the required assessments will result in the application being denied.

41 **Behavioral Screening Assessment**

42 As part of the application process for Discovery School, all applicants in Grades K-3 will
43 participate in a brief behavior screening assessment designed to evaluate domains such as self-
44 regulation, social skills, conduct history, and learning-engagement behaviors. The purpose of the
45 screener is to ensure that applicants are a strong match for the school’s accelerated curriculum and
46 to identify any early supports the student may require.

47 Prior to administration, parents/guardians will receive information about the screening instrument.
48 Participation is required for full consideration of the application; however, parents may submit
49 alternative evaluation results for additional consideration. Screening results will be treated as
50 confidential and will be used as one of multiple factors in the selection process (alongside
51 academic assessment, teacher/parent input, and available spaces).

52 The school reserves the right to use screening results to: (a) inform admission decisions;
53 (b) plan supports for enrolled students who demonstrate elevated risk or need; and (c) ensure
54 programmatic readiness for the student’s success.

55 All screening procedures and decisions will comply with applicable federal and state laws
56 concerning nondiscrimination, disability rights (IDEA, Section 504), and privacy.

57 **Reference Requirements**

58 As part of the application process, families must provide the name and email address of a non-
59 related individual who can complete a recommendation form for the applicant and who has
60 observed the child in an educational or structured group setting.

61 1. **Kindergarten Applicants:** If the child is attending a preschool program, a preschool
62 teacher must be listed as the reference. If the child has not attended preschool or any
63 structured early-childhood program, a non-related adult who has supervised the child in a
64 group setting may be used.

65 2. **Applicants for Grades 1-6:** If the applicant is currently attending school or attended
66 school during the previous year (i.e., not transitioning from homeschool), a classroom
67 teacher must be listed as the reference. Homeschooled students may list a non-related adult
68 who has observed the student in an instructional or structured setting.

69 Recommendation forms will be sent directly to the identified individual by Discovery School and
70 must be submitted directly back to the school. Recommendations submitted by parents/guardians
71 will not be accepted.

72 **Selection Criteria**

73 Admissions decisions will be based on screening assessment results, required recommendation
74 information, and completion of all other application components. Applicants will be ranked within
75 each stanine by total points earned from academic and cognitive measures. Students will be
76 admitted based on the number of spaces available in each grade level from the most point to least
77 point value within their stanine.

78 In addition to the scoring outlined above, the following priority order will also impact selection
79 based on the number of spaces available in each grade level:

- 80 1. Residents of Murfreesboro City: applicants residing within the geographical boundaries of
81 Murfreesboro will have priority and will be admitted according to rank order. Children of
82 employees of Murfreesboro City Schools living outside of the geographical boundaries of
83 the City will be considered within this priority order, contingent upon the parent’s
84 continued employment with Murfreesboro City Schools.
- 85 2. Siblings of Currently Enrolled Students: applicants who are siblings of currently enrolled
86 students will have priority and will be admitted as ranked within each stanine.

87 Applicants who are residents of Rutherford County, but residing outside of the geographical
88 boundaries of Murfreesboro, may be admitted according to rank order if there is space available
89 following the admission of Murfreesboro residents and siblings of currently enrolled students.

90 **Waiting List and Admissions**

91 Discovery School administration will provide each applicant with written notice of admission
92 status, whether admitted, placed on a wait list, or if the applicant did not qualify.

93 A. Offer of Admission

94 If the applicant is admitted, the parent/guardian will be required to accept or decline enrollment
95 by the designated date included in the notice. Failure by the parent to accept the offer of
96 admission by the designated deadline may result in the forfeiture of the space. Each applicant
97 must provide documentation to verify the student’s residence at the time of initial admission.

98 B. Wait List

99 Applicants may be placed on a wait list if the applicant met the minimum scoring criteria.
100 Applicants placed on the wait list will be notified of their position on the wait list. Openings
101 that occur before fall break of the MCS calendar will be filled from the wait list based on
102 priority order. Applicants that were placed on the wait list and did not gain entrance or did not
103 meet the requirements, will need to retest for the following year.

104 **Continued Enrollment**

105 Current Discovery School students will not be required to retest each year to remain enrolled.
106 Because the Discovery Schools offers accelerated curriculum, students are expected to maintain
107 strong academic performance, attendance, and comply with the MCS Code of Conduct. A student
108 who fails to comply with these expectations may be required to return to their school of zone.
109 Discovery School administration will provide a parent with written notice of potential exit from
110 the school prior to withdrawal.