

School Application Selection Process

Town Hall Meeting

Presented By: RPS Enrollment, Placement, and Planning Department

Venue: J.L. Francis Elementary School

Date: August 3, 2023

Framing Our Conversation

Key Things to Keep in Mind

- We're asking for input today - not making any decisions. Your participation and input will help RPS decide what proposed changes to our selection processes to take to the School Board.
- It is critical that the voices of all families are included in this process. If there's someone who you think should be a part of this conversation, share event details with them (or give us their information)! This is definitely not the only opportunity for feedback.
- The proposals we will discuss are grounded in recommendations created by the RPS Equity Commission on Enrollment. Their final report is available on our website.
- Any proposed changes would take effect for the school year 2024-25 application cycle which will open in October 2023.
- Data in this slide deck is for demonstration and discussion purposes. Hypothetical examples are meant to illustrate proposals.

Norms for Tonight's Town Hall

Key Things to Keep in Mind

- We are here to learn from you!
- Everyone listens and everyone gets an opportunity to share.
- Trust what you will share. Speak from your heart, your perspective, your experience.
- Be mindful of your time and considerate of others participation.
- Respect the unique perspectives in this room. Listen to learn and understand.



Agenda Template



Time	Activity
6:00 - 6:03 PM (3 min)	Introductions and Framing
6:03 - 6:15 PM (12 min)	School Applications Process Overview
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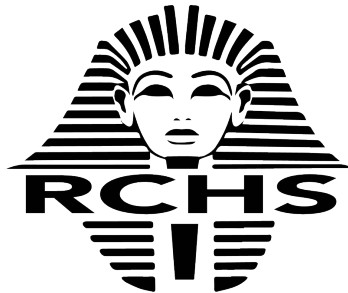
RPS Specialty Schools

Richmond Public Schools has several specialty schools that require participation in their selection process for admission. Students are eligible to apply to:

- Franklin Military Academy (6th - 12th grade)
- Open High School (9th and 10th grade)
- Richmond Community High School (9th and 10th grade)
- Thomas Jefferson International Baccalaureate Programme (11th grade)
- The Governor's STEM Academy for Career and Technical Education at Richmond Technical Center (9th grade).

Seats vary year to year based on current enrollment, building capacity, and staffing.

The Governor's STEM Academy for CTE at RTC and Thomas Jefferson's IB Diploma Programme are not full-time schools but rather are a half-time program (GSA @ RTC) or a program within a school (TJ).



Franklin Military Academy
Richmond Public Schools

Selection Process - Specialty Schools

Common Application Components

- The online common application in Enroll RPS streamlines the application to all schools for which a student is interested and eligible
- Online common applications include the following required components:
 - Two teacher recommendations using a standard questionnaire
 - Short answer (all schools and grades) and essay (only high school students)
 - Scoring is double-blind by members of the school team and normed against a school rubric
 - Students choose from a list of three essay options
- All students have the opportunity to interview at each school to which they apply
- Grade Point Average from the last two years is incorporated into a student's final score

School Specific Flexibilities

- Schools set individual component weights and their related scoring rubrics
- School teams conduct and score interviews and score writing components

Selection Process - Specialty Schools

Category	Franklin Military Academy	Open High School	Richmond Community High School
Recommendations	25	20	15
Writing	25	35	15
Grades	25	30	35
Interview	25	15	35
Total Points	100	100	100

Regional Governor's Schools

Richmond Public Schools also purchases seats for students to attend three regional governor's schools:

- Appomattox Regional Governor's School
- Maggie L. Walker Governor's School
- CodeRVA

Each of these schools has their own selection process for admission. RPS is represented on the regional school boards by our Gifted and Talented Coordinator and a member of the RPS School Board.

CodeRVA does not use selective criteria for admission. Their selection process not being considered for changes this year.



Selection Process Overview - Governor's Schools

Appomattox Regional Governor's School

Students select one of eight focus areas for adjudication:

- Dance
- Instrumental Music
- Literary Arts
- Theater Arts /Technical Theater
- Theater Arts Musical
- Technology
- Vocal Music
- Visual Arts

Students are ranked under each category based on their audition recommendations, essay, interview, grades and scores for rigor. Each focus area has their own acceptance and wait list.

Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

Students are ranked numerically by their total composite score consisting of recommendations, essay scores, ability test scores, grades, and rigor. The top qualifying student from each RPS middle school (8) and private sector (1) are offered a slot at MLWGS. The same is true for wait listed students. The remaining slots are selected from the ranked composite score list.

Selection Process Overview - Governor's Schools

Appomattox Regional Governor's School

Category	Maximum Points
Recommendations (A&B)	10
Essay	10
Grades	15
Program Rigor	5
Audition / Portfolio Review	50
Interview	10
Total Points	100

Maggie L. Walker Governor's School

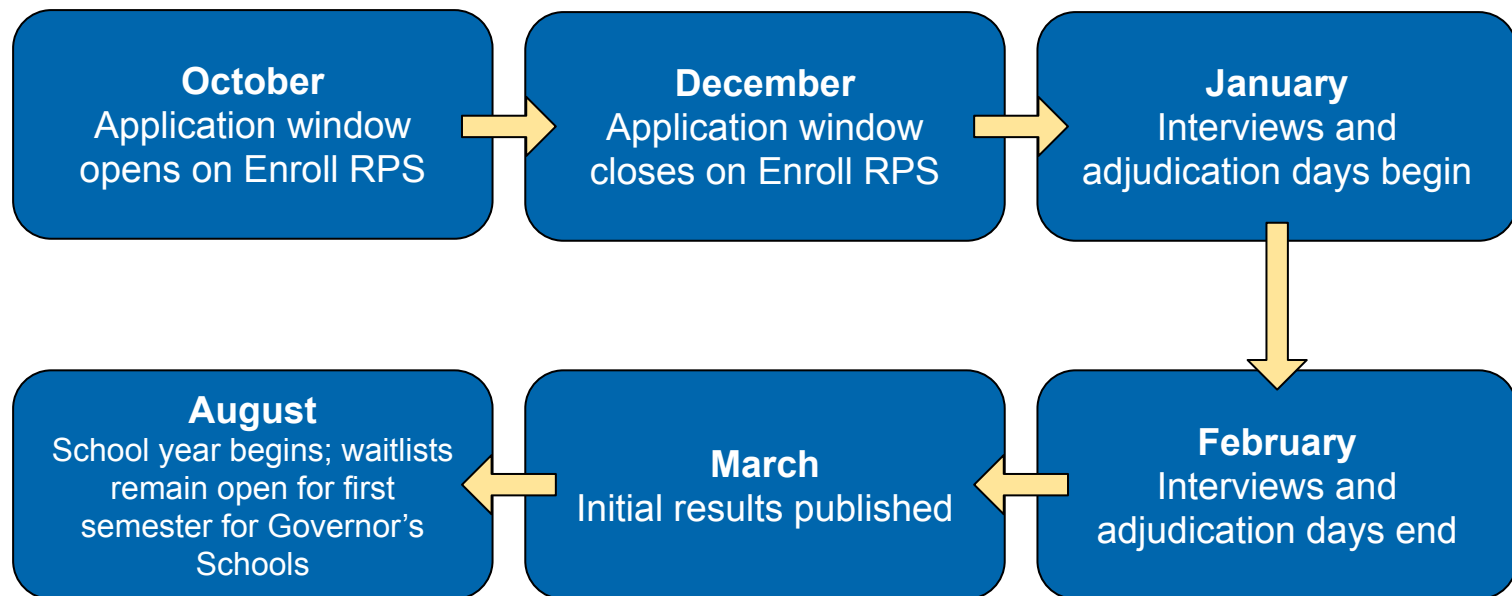
Category	Maximum Points
Recommendations (A & B)	15
Essay (A & B)	25
Grades	30
Program Rigor	5
Ability Test	25
Total Points	100

Selection Process

How does the selection process work?

1. Students submit applications by December 1st.
2. All applications are reviewed for eligibility
3. Application Scoring (December to Mid-February)
 - a. Writing components are shared with school teams (de-identified) for double-blind scoring.
 - b. Interviews are scheduled and scored by school or regional teams
 - c. GPA (unweighted) is calculated by Enrollment, Placement, and Planning using school GPA rubrics
 - d. Recommendation scores are calculated automatically using teacher responses
 - e. Regional assessments are scored on campus
4. All component scores for each application are loaded into a centralized database. Students are ranked based on composite score and assigned a seat offer, waitlist number, or are deemed not eligible according to individual school rules.
5. Students and families receive results online in Enroll RPS in early March.

Selection Process Timeline



2023-24 Application Totals

School	Total Submitted Applications	Target Seats Total (All Grades)
Appomattox Regional Governor's School	93	32
Franklin Military Academy	373	129
Maggie L. Walker Governor's School	246	60
Open High School	397	50
Richmond Community High School	368	75
Total Applications	1,477	346



Norms for Table Conversations

Key Things to Keep in Mind

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- Trust what you will share. Speak from your heart, your perspective, your experience.
- Be mindful of your time and considerate of others participation.
- Respect the unique perspectives in this room. Listen to learn and understand.
- The proposals we will discuss are grounded in recommendations created by the RPS Equity Commission on Enrollment. Their final report is available on our website.
- We hope you consider proposals from this perspective:
 - *Does it make selective schools more diverse and/or the application process more equitable?*
 - *Will families understand how this proposal works?*
 - *Can this proposal be implemented with integrity?*

Equity Commission Proposal - Diversity Goals

Proposal: Create Diversity Goals to Guide Changes to Application and Selection Processes

Create diversity goals to guide specialty school application and enrollment processes. Each specialty school should seek to serve students within plus/minus 5-10 percentage points of the subgroup overall enrollment in the division.*

**Equity Commission Final Report, Pg. 6*

Specialty and Governor's School Enrollment 2022-23

School	Total RPS Students	Active Exceptional Education	Economically Disadvantaged	English Language Learner
Appomattox Regional Governor's School	85	2%	11%	0%
Maggie L. Walker Governor's School	205	0%	10%	0%
Franklin Military Academy	286	5%	62%	9%
Open High School	179	2%	37%	3%
Richmond Community High School	197	1%	38%	1%
RPS Overall	21,721	13%	69%	18%

Notes:

- Enrollment data is as of March 14, 2023.
- Some students are missing individual indicators for economically disadvantaged status. These students are not included as economically disadvantaged.

Specialty and Governor's School Enrollment 2022-23

School	Total RPS Students	Asian	Black	Hispanic / Latino	Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	Multiple Races	Native Alaskan / American Indian	White
Appomattox Regional Governor's School	85	2.4%	14.1%	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%	1.2%	65.9%
Maggie L. Walker Governor's School	205	3.9%	7.3%	5.9%	0.0%	5.4%	0.0%	77.6%
Franklin Military Academy	286	0.3%	60.8%	24.1%	0.0%	2.4%	0.3%	11.9%
Open High School	179	1.1%	36.3%	19.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.6%	39.7%
Richmond Community High School	197	0.5%	58.9%	9.6%	0.0%	5.6%	0.5%	24.9%
RPS Overall	21,721	0.5%	60.5%	25.2%	0.0%	2.7%	0.3%	10.8%

Notes:

- Enrollment data is as of March 14, 2023.
- 2.4% of ARGS students have no data identified.

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Proposal 1 Overview

Proposal: Reconfigure the *Specialty School* Application Process

"Require a minimum GPA of 2.5 and run a lottery for any applicants who are at or above the minimum. Once the applicant pool is created for qualifying students based on GPA, add a weight for students who are considered Economically Disadvantaged by the state. Add an additional weight for students who attended an elementary or middle school where ED students accounted for the divisionwide school-level average of ED students or higher (e.g., 60% in RPS middle schools, so 60% or higher). Strength of weights should correspond with diversity goals."*

Proposal: Modify the *Governor's School* Selection Process

"Set an evidence-based minimum criteria score for admission to Governor's schools from RPS (e.g., 70) and enter all students who scored 70 or above in a lottery. Apply the same weights described [above] to RPS Governor's school applicants during the division's lottery selection process."*

**Equity Commission Final Report Page 6, Page 30*

Proposal 1 Overview Continued

How would this proposal work?

For specialty school applications, students would still submit applications in Enroll RPS. Once GPA data is available, students would be marked Eligible or Ineligible based on the cutoff. Then, a randomized lottery would run, similar to the process used for open enrollment, to determine seat offers and waitlist order. Implied in this proposal is that other components - interviews, writing, recommendations - would be removed.

For governor's school applications, students would still go through the application process as designed. Once final composite scores are determined, they would enter a lottery, similar to the process for open enrollment, to determine seat offers and waitlist order.

Proposal 1 Discussion

Proposal - Reconfigure the Specialty School and Governor's School Application Process

Question Prompts for Note Taking

- Is this proposal clear? Do you think families will understand how it works?
- What are some challenges/barriers you foresee in implementing this proposal?
- What are the potential benefits of this proposal? What are the drawbacks?
- What other questions does this proposal raise?
- Would this adjustment encourage you / discourage you or your child from applying?
- How would this adjustment impact your perception of the school application process?

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Proposal 2

Proposal 2: Allocate Guaranteed Seats for Students from each RPS School and Private School / Homeschool

Similar to the approach implemented by Henrico County Public Schools for 2023-24, allocate a set amount of seats to regional Governor's Schools based on the the number of middle schools across RPS school district plus include the private sector as one entity.

For example, for decades, each RPS middle school has offered a top qualified student a seat to attend Maggie Walker Governor's School. Henrico followed suit. This upcoming school year the Henrico School Board purchased 12 additional seats to be offered to each HCPS middle school therefore promising each school 2 guaranteed seats for qualified students.

RPS has added 30 additional seats at MLWGS within the last 3 years (10 additional seats in each 9th grade class). RPS has 8 middle schools. The proposal would guarantee three qualified students from each middle school and from private schools/homeschool to be offered seats (27). Remaining seats would be awarded to students based on their overall composite score.

**Students would still be required to meet prerequisites for admission.*

Proposal 2 Overview Discussion

Allocate a Set Amount of Seats for Students from each RPS School & Private School / Homeschool

Question Prompts for Note Taking

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Proposal 3 Overview

Economically Disadvantaged Status

In RPS (and Virginia schools), low-socioeconomic students are coded with an economically disadvantaged (ED) status. Per the VDOE, a student who is a member of a household that meets the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals (less than or equal to 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines). These are students who are eligible for free/reduced meals, receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or is eligible for Medicaid. If the student is identified as experiencing homelessness or becomes identified as migrant, at any point during the school year, the student is automatically identified as economically disadvantaged and is also eligible for the Free and Reduced Meals Program*.

Proposal: Allocate a Percentage of Seats to ED Students

A set percentage of total seats would be held for ED students who submitted applications. For example, if 50% of seats were reserved for ED students, and a school has 60 rising 9th grade seats, 30 seats would be held for the highest ranking ED students.

The remaining seats would go to the highest ranking students in the overall pool – regardless of their ED status.

Proposal 3 Overview Continued

Proposal Visualized

Student Score	Applicant Rank	Economically Disadvantaged	Original Result	New Result
80.0	59	No	Offered	Offered
78.5	60	No	Offered	Waitlist
78.0	61	Yes	Waitlist	Offered

This assumes that the school has not meet the percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students seat offers through higher ranking applicants.

Proposal 3 Discussion

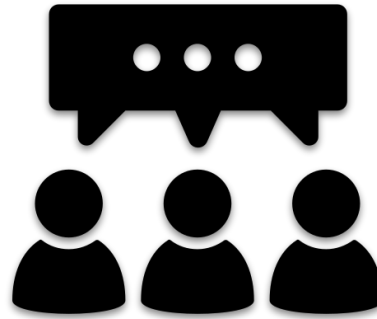
Proposal - Allocate a Percentage of Seats To ED Students

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Table Share



What did your table discuss?

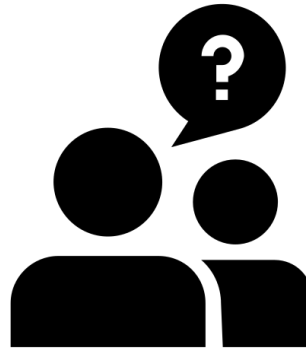
Proposal 1 - Percentage of Disadvantaged Seats

Proposal 2 - Reconfigure the Selection Process

Proposal 3 - Additional Governor's School Seats per Middle School

Other Ideas that came up?

Questions & Answers



If you have question you'd like to share but don't have time
- or think of it later - visit our website and submit it in the
Feedback Form!





How to Stay Engaged

- Visit our selection engagement website for updates (www.rvaschools.net/students-families/enroll/school-applications/school-application-updates-engagement) Previous Town Hall slides and the Equity Commission Final Report are available there.
- Complete the feedback form on our website (link above / QR code)
- Attend another town hall, recommend your student for an upcoming student conversation / focus group, send us an email at enrollrps@rvachools.net.
- Watch upcoming School Board meetings for an engagement update and provide public comment. The School Board is scheduled to receive a final update in August where they will receive our proposals for this phase of changes.