

Magnet School Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a magnet school?

Magnet schools are free public schools that are organized around specialized themes designed to appeal to a student's interests and aptitudes and attract students from a large attendance area. District 196 magnet schools do not require aptitude or achievement tests. Our magnet school learning environments are designed to successfully educate all students.

Q. What is a magnet student?

Magnet students are District 196 students who have applied and been accepted to a District 196 Magnet School and do not live in the school's attendance area.

Q. How do I decide which school is the best school for my child? How can I know if a theme will be beneficial for my five year old? How do I know what my child's long range interests will be?

There are many factors that go into school choice. A tour of the school is a great way to gather first hand information about the learning environment. Visit District 196 magnet schools during the Fall *Spotlight on Schools* tours. You may also call the school to find out what times are available for individual tours. Families are encouraged to also gather data about a magnet school of interest by exploring the school web page, social media, and other marketing materials. Magnet schools use the same core curriculum as all District 196 elementary schools. Learning is augmented with themed lessons and an inquiry-based learning environment. Learning at a magnet school will support the future endeavors of all of our children.

Q. How do I apply to a District 196 magnet school?

The application period is from the middle of October through the middle of January for elementary, and middle October through the middle of December for Valley Middle School of STEM and the School of Environmental Studies. See Enrollment Guidelines on the magnet school web page: www.district196.org/magnetschools

Q. If I live in the attendance area of a magnet school, do I need to apply?

No, our magnet schools are still neighborhood schools and if your attendance area is a magnet school, you do not need to apply. If you do not know your attendance area visit our boundary search tool at: www.district196.org/about/maps

Q. If I live in the attendance area of a magnet school, but I want to attend a different magnet school, do I need to apply?

Yes, if you want to attend a different magnet school other than your neighborhood magnet school you need to go through the application process. See Enrollment Guidelines on the magnet school web page: www.district196.org/magnetschools

Q. I have more than one child, do I need to apply for each child to attend the school?

Yes, all children living outside of a magnet school's attendance area need to apply in order to attend that magnet school. The lottery process does include a sibling preference to help families keep siblings in the same school if possible. Acceptance is not guaranteed, it is based on available space.

Q. What is sibling preference?

If you currently have a magnet student at your magnet school of choice, your family will receive priority during the lottery process. Acceptance is not guaranteed, it is based on available space.

Q. Is transportation provided?

If you live in District 196, **YES**, transportation is provided. See Elementary Transportation Guidelines or Middle School Enrollment and Transportation Guidelines on the magnet school web page: www.district196.org/magnetschools. Generally transportation changes are not made during the school year.

Q. When will I know where my student's bus stop is and how long his/her bus ride will be?

The transportation department establishes bus routes over the summer and mails bus stop information cards to all magnet school families in late August. Routes are established so no student rides the bus for more than one hour and fifteen minutes one way.

Q. Will my child's bus stop stay the same as now?

Generally speaking, yes.

Q. If my child is accepted at a magnet school, is it necessary to re-apply for the next year?

No, once a student is enrolled in school he/she may stay at that school for his/her entire elementary career.

Q. I live outside of District 196, may I apply?

Yes, out-of-district residents are allowed to apply. Transportation is not provided.

Q. What should I do if my child is waitlisted for a magnet school?

We suggest that you continue to remain on the waitlist and also enroll your child at your attendance area school. We will be able to tell you exactly where you are on the waitlist. In previous years, we have found that throughout the spring and summer we are often able to place students from the waitlist into classrooms. If your child gets pulled off of the waitlist you will be contacted immediately with next steps. Schools can pull off of their waitlists up until July 15th.

Q. Is there a Middle School magnet option?

Yes, Valley Middle School of STEM is a great option for your Magnet Students. Any middle school-age students may apply to attend. See our Middle School Enrollment Guidelines at <http://www.district196.org/MagnetSchools> to apply. The middle school STEM experience has a strong emphasis on hands-on, experimental and inquiry-based activities. Interactive lessons and activities teach the engineering design process, develop problem solving skills and build learners for life.

Q. Is there a High School magnet option?

Yes, the School of Environmental Studies (SES) and Apple Valley High School (STEM) are great options for your Magnet Students. SES requires an application and students are selected through a Lottery. Visit www.district196.org/magnetschools for more information.

The School of Environmental Studies is a public environmental magnet school for juniors and seniors in high school. It has a unique partnership between District 196, the city of Apple Valley and the State of Minnesota (Minnesota Zoo). The mission at SES is to create and inspire a thoughtful community of leaders who engage with others to create a sustainable world. [School of Environmental Studies Website](#)

Apple Valley High School is a state and nationally recognized high school offering something for all, including a rigorous curriculum, award-winning arts programs and championship athletic teams. Their fabrication lab and science, technology, engineering and math focus emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, innovation and real-world problem-solving that prepare students for post-secondary education and careers in high-demand STEM-related fields. [Apple Valley High School Website](#)