

W.E. Greiner Exploratory Arts Academy: "How to Apply" Guide

2027–2028 School Year | Grades 6–8 Fine Arts Magnet

1. Program Overview

W.E. Greiner Exploratory Arts Academy is Dallas ISD's only Fine Arts Academy, a magnet program within a neighborhood middle school serving grades 6–8.

Students take a full academic course load while studying one arts concentration every day: Band, Choir, Dance, Mariachi & Orchestra, Piano, Theatre, or Visual Arts. Families apply online for one fine arts academy, and students then audition on campus for a seat.

Admission is based on selective criteria, including academic performance, test scores, and a campus audition.

2. Open House & Campus Tour Dates

- **Open House:** Wednesday, October 28, 2026, 5:00–8:00 PM at W.E. Greiner Exploratory Arts Academy, 501 S. Edgefield Ave., Dallas, TX 75208.
- **Campus Tours:** Tours are held after school hours, by appointment only, based on the availability of a counselor or the magnet coordinator. If you're interested, email Ms. Merilyn Peña at mpenachavez@dallasisd.org to see if a tour can be arranged. Please include the student's first and last name, your contact information (phone and email), and the academy your child is interested in.

3. Audition Dates & Testing Schedule

- **Audition Scheduling Opens:** November 9, 2026. After you apply, watch your email for a SchoolMint link to book an audition time.

- **Audition Dates:** Each academy director sets their own audition dates. See the schedule by academy below and book a time for the academy you applied to.
- **Round One:** Round one applications close January 1, 2027.
- **Can't make a listed time?** Email the academy director directly (Section 11) to ask about another date.
- **Where:** On campus at W.E. Greiner, 501 S. Edgefield Ave.

Audition Schedule by Academy

Academy	Audition Dates & Times	Good to Know
Band (Mr. Bremer, Mr. Luna)	Round 1 Thu., Jan. 7, 2027: 4:00–5:00 PM (20 spots) Sat., Jan. 23, 2027: 9:00–10:00 AM or 10:00–11:00 AM (20 spots each) Round 2 Sat., Feb. 6, 2027: 9:00–10:00 AM or 10:00–11:00 AM (20 spots each)	All band auditions are in the spring semester.
Choir (Ms. Winters)	Thu., Nov. 12, 2026: 11:30 AM–12:30 PM Wed., Dec. 2, 2026: 4:30–5:30 PM Dec. 11, 2026: 11:30 AM–12:30 PM Wed., Jan. 20, 2027: 4:30–5:30 PM Thu., Jan. 21, 2027: 11:30 AM–12:30 PM Mon., Feb. 8, 2027: 4:30–5:30 PM Thu., Feb. 11, 2027: 11:30 AM–12:30 PM	Up to 10 students per date. Ms. Santiago and Ms. Savarese will host and record auditions. Questions: email Ms. Winters at greinerchoir@gmail.com (she will not have access to her district email while on leave).
Dance (Ms. Santiago, Ms. Savarese)	Wed., Dec. 16, 2026: 2:30–5:00 PM Sat., Jan. 23, 2027: 9:00 AM–12:00 PM Sat., Feb. 6, 2027: 9:00 AM–12:00 PM Sat., Mar. 6, 2027: 9:00 AM–12:00 PM	Each student gets a 10-minute slot. Please access this link for audition information and video links to the movement phrase: Dance Audition Information
Mariachi & Orchestra (Mr. Diaz, Ms. Garcia)	Thu., Dec. 10, 2026: 5:00–5:30 PM Sat., Jan. 9, 2027: 9:00–9:30 AM Tue., Feb. 9, 2027: 5:00–5:30 PM	Room 111 (Orchestra Room). Up to 40 students per session.

Academy	Audition Dates & Times	Good to Know
Piano (Mr. Rentowski)	Tuesdays & Fridays: 4:15–5:15 PM	Four students per 1-hour slot; about 15 minutes per student.
Theatre (Ms. Powell)	Thu., Jan. 14, 2027 Thu., Jan. 21, 2027 Thu., Feb. 11, 2027 All sessions start at 4:30 PM.	10 spots per date. Auditions last about 2½ hours.
Visual Arts (Ms. Lee, Ms. Ambriz, Ms. Pryor)	Thu., Dec. 3, 2026: 4:30–5:30 PM Sat., Jan. 30, 2027 Sat., Feb. 20, 2027 Sat., Apr. 3, 2027 Saturday times: 9:00–10:00 AM, 10:00–11:00 AM, or 11:00 AM–12:00 PM	Up to 30 students per time slot. The full audition takes about one hour.

4. Projected Openings & Seat Availability

Projected open seats for the 2027–2028 school year. Most seats open in 6th grade. 7th grade has a small number of openings, and there are no 8th grade openings this cycle.

Academy	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Piano	25	6	0
Choir	25	0	0
Theatre	25	4	0
Dance	40	2	0
Band	50	1	0
Visual Arts	60	5	0
Mariachi & Orchestra	50	4	0
Total	275	22	0

5. Required Documents

Applicants must upload all required documentation to the online portal:

1. **Academic Records:** Most recent report card (progress reports are not accepted). The report card must show the student's full name, grading period, school year, and school name.
2. **Standardized Test Scores:** Qualifying scores from Spring 2026 STAAR, i-Ready, or [Dallas ISD approved assessments](#).
3. **Proof of Residency:** Utility bill (electric, gas, water) dated within 60 days, mortgage statement, or lease agreement.
 - The name on the bill must match a parent/guardian on the application, and the address must match the student profile address.
 - **Living in a home where the lease or bills are in someone else's name?** Please also provide a signed letter from the homeowner or the person whose name is on the bills, stating that your family lives at that address. We can't accept the address without it.
4. **Special Services Documents (if applicable):** Copy of current IEP or 504 Plan.

6. Eligibility Criteria

- **Minimum Grade Average:** 75 cumulative grade average.
- **Minimum Test Scores:** Students must meet the minimum in BOTH Reading and Math on either Spring 2026 STAAR or i-Ready. See the full district [2026–2027 magnet requirements](#).

Spring 2026 STAAR Eligibility

Grade Applying To	STAAR Tested Grade	Math Scale Score (percentile)	Reading Scale Score (percentile)
6th	4th	1490 (38th)	1501 (38th)
6th – Spanish STAAR	4th	1490 (38th)	1408 (47th)
7th	5th	1557 (38th)	1576 (39th)
7th – Spanish STAAR	5th	1557 (38th)	1456 (40th)

i-Ready Eligibility: 40th percentile or higher in both Reading and Math. Accepted i-Ready results: 2026 End-of-Year (from 2025–26), or 2026 Beginning-of-Year and Middle-of-Year (from 2026–27).

7. Audition Overview & Criteria

Applicants who meet the grade average and test score requirements move on to an on-campus audition for the academy they applied to. Each academy scores its audition out of 100 points. Applicants must score a minimum of 70 to be included in the selection process.

Several academies have two versions of the audition: one for students with experience and one for beginners, so no experience is required to apply.

Band – Woodwind & Brass (with experience)

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Scales	20	Three of these scales: Concert Bb, Ab, Eb, F, G, C
Concert Bb chromatic scale	10	Accuracy and control
Sight-reading	10	Short piece given by the director on audition day
Solo	50	A solo of your choice
Teacher recommendation	10	One recommendation from a teacher
Total	100	

Band – Percussion (with experience)

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Rudiments	30	Flam, paradiddle, and double stroke rudiments (10 points each)
Sight-reading	20	Short piece given by the director on audition day
Solo	50	A solo of your choice
Total	100	

Band – No Experience

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Introduction / interview	20	Answer in full sentences with a clear, confident voice: family musicians, a place to practice at home, sports and activities, awards, favorite subject, and why you'd be a great addition to the band
Letter of recommendation	10	Full support = 10, reservations = 5, not turned in = 0
Vocal selection	30	Sing any song (even "Happy Birthday") or a prepared piece with a karaoke track. Scored on confidence, pitch, rhythm, steady tempo, and enthusiasm
Aural (listening) test	40	Given during the audition
Total	100	

Band notes: Students will join the band Google Classroom (the directors share the link). The prepared solo can be anything played this school year (All-Region music, All-City music, a solo, or a line from a book) as long as it is 16 measures, or students may use the music provided in Google Classroom. The aural (listening) test takes about 30 minutes and must be done on campus. Beginners pick three instrument choices: flute, clarinet, saxophone, French horn, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, or percussion (guitar and drum set are not offered). Directors do their best to place students on their first choice, but placement is based on testing and section needs.

Choir

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Prepared song	30	Bring sheet music (10 pts). Tone, memorization, rhythm, and expression
Rhythm, pitch matching & given song	30	Echo rhythms and pitches, and learn a short song taught at the audition
Sight-reading	10	Tone, steady pulse, rhythm, and pitch
Interview	15	Why Greiner Choir? What do you enjoy about choir? A time you were challenged and how you overcame it
Letter of recommendation	15	From a current music or academic teacher
Total	100	

Dance

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Combination	75	Learn and perform a dance combination: memorization, skill and sequencing, and performance quality
Splits	10	Right, left, and center
Etiquette & attire	10	Leotard and tights, or T-shirt and leggings; hair secured
Recommendation	5	At least one letter of recommendation
Total	100	

Optional: students may also present a solo in the genre of their choice (no longer than 1 minute).

Dance audition details

- **Audition phrase (required):** Please access this link for audition information and video links to the movement phrase: [Dance Audition Information](#). Provide an email and the combination will be made available up to one week before the audition.
- **Attire:** Girls wear a solid-color leotard (black) with pink or skin-tone ballet tights. Boys wear a black T-shirt tucked in and black ballet leggings. No dance skirts or large shirts over dance attire. Ballet shoes are optional; otherwise wear socks.
- **Hair:** Neatly and securely pulled away from the face and neck, in a bun.
- **Folklorico:** Students with Folklorico experience can bring their shoes and will be asked to demonstrate a zapateado.
- **Bring:** A letter of recommendation from a dance, cheer, or praise teacher/coach (or an academic teacher if you don't have one) and a list of performing experiences.
- **Time:** Each student has a 10-minute time slot and may leave once dismissed.

Mariachi & Orchestra (with instrument lessons)

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Instrumental solo	60	Memorization/preparation, tone and intonation, control and phrasing, posture and technique
Vocal solo	20	Same four areas as the instrumental solo
Interview	20	Communication skills
Sight-reading	—	Not scored; used only for level placement
Total	100	

Mariachi & Orchestra (no instrument lessons, vocal only)

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Vocal solo	70	Preparation, memorization, tone, control, posture, rhythm, and expression
Interview	30	Communication skills
Total	100	

Piano – No Experience

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Pitch	20	Sing a short song (4 measures)
Rhythm	20	Rhythm reading, 4 measures in 4/4
Note reading	20	2 measures in treble clef
Keys – right hand	15	Play C, D, E, F, G
Keys – left hand	15	Play C, D, E, F, G
Music experience	10	Any time spent on another instrument or in choir
Total	100	

Piano – With Experience

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Pitch	10	Sing a short song (4 measures)
Rhythm	20	4 measures in 4/4 with rhythm symbols
Sight-reading	20	4 measures in treble clef, slow tempo
Technique – right hand	15	C major scale and chord
Technique – left hand	15	C major scale and chord
Prepared piece	20	A piece played with both hands (8 measures)
Total	100	

Piano students also answer interview questions: why you'd be a great addition, a piano or keyboard to practice on at home, activities, awards, favorite subject, and your personality.

Theatre

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Improvisation and collaboration	25	Working with a partner, creativity, and taking risks
Prepared monologue	30	Stage presence, voice, movement, emotion, character choices, and polish
Technical Challenge	25	Sketch, build, present
Interview	20	Motivation, personal identity, experience, collaboration, and future goals
Total	100	

For more detailed information about the theatre auditions CLICK THE LINK:

[Greiner Theatre Academy Audition Packet](#)

Visual Arts

Component	Points	What Judges Look For
Drawing from observation	40	Draw a still life on site. Accuracy and shading (light and dark) to make objects look 3-D
Portfolio	50	Finished artwork showing craftsmanship and the elements and principles of design
Interview	10	Why practice matters, what brings you joy in art and which artists inspire you, and your favorite medium
Total	100	

From the Art Directors: Applicants should come prepared to share a selection of original artwork that best demonstrates their artistic skills, creativity, and individual style. As part of the audition process, applicants will complete a still-life drawing exercise and participate in a brief interview with the Art Directors. The interview will provide an opportunity to discuss their artistic interests, experiences, and goals. The entire audition process will take approximately one hour. Applicants are encouraged to bring artwork that reflects their strengths, creativity, and passion for the visual arts. We look forward to seeing your work and learning more about you as an artist!

8. Selection Process & Seat Offers

Dallas ISD magnet school seat offers and student selection are governed by Board Policy EHBJ (LOCAL):

- **30% District-Wide Seats:** Awarded district-wide by rank ordering applicants based on their overall criteria score.
- **70% Feeder Pattern Seats:** Awarded within the feeder pattern by rank ordering applicants based on their overall criteria score, ensuring diversity across all Dallas ISD feeders.
- **Sibling Preference:** For middle school academies, the campus assessment score is increased by 5 points for eligible siblings.
- **In-District Priority:** All qualified in-district students are served before any out-of-district student may be admitted. Proof of residence is required annually. Temporary addresses and notarized informal guardianship letters are not accepted.

- **Out-of-District Applicants:** Considered only if seats remain. A \$100 testing fee applies to students living outside Dallas ISD boundaries.

9. Key Timeline & Important Dates

- **October 28, 2026:** Greiner Open House, 5:00–8:00 PM.
- **November 1, 2026:** Online application window opens on the [Choose Dallas ISD Portal](#).
- **November 7, 2026:** Discover Dallas ISD Choice Fair (Fair Park – Automobile Building, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM).
- **November 9, 2026:** Greiner audition scheduling begins.
- **November 12, 2026:** First Greiner auditions (Choir). See Section 3 for every academy's dates.
- **January 1, 2027:** Greiner round one applications close.
- **January 31, 2027:** Dallas ISD magnet application deadline.
- **February 26, 2027:** Acceptance status emailed to parents.
- **March 12, 2027:** Last day to confirm or decline a seat.
- **April 1, 2027:** Registration opens for new and returning students (register at the school that accepted you).

10. Tips for Parents

- **Come to our Open House.** Join us October 28 from 5:00–8:00 PM to see the academies and meet the directors.
- **Book a tour.** Tours are after school hours, by appointment only. Email Ms. Peña at mpenachavez@dallasisd.org with the student's first and last name, your contact information, and the academy you're interested in. Seeing the classrooms and asking questions in person helps your child know what to expect.
- **Come to the Choice Fair.** Visit Fair Park on November 7. It's the easiest way to compare schools and ask questions in person.
- **Choose the art your child loves.** Students spend time in their academy every day for three years, so pick the one they're excited about, not just the one with the most seats.

- **Apply in 6th grade if you can.** Almost all of our openings are in 6th grade. 7th grade has only a few seats, and 8th grade has none this year.
- **Rank your choices carefully.** You can rank up to 5 choice schools (no more than 2 magnets). The system gives your child the highest-ranked school they qualify for, so put your first choice first.
- **Check your residency paperwork.** The utility bill or lease must be dated within 60 days and match the address on your profile. If they don't match, the application can get held up.
- **Watch your email, including spam.** Audition scheduling links come from SchoolMint. Book your time as soon as you get it.
- **Practice, but keep it simple.** For the audition, a short piece your child knows well will go better than a hard one they're still learning. Practice in front of family so performing feels normal.
- **Ask for recommendation letters early.** Band, Choir, and Dance give points for a teacher recommendation. Give teachers a couple of weeks' notice.
- **Don't wait for the deadline.** Round one closes January 1, so submit early. That leaves time to fix any missing documents.
- **What to bring on audition day:**
 - **Band:** Your instrument (if you play one), solo music, and a teacher recommendation letter.
 - **Choir:** Sheet music for your prepared song (memorize it) and a letter of recommendation.
 - **Dance:** Leotard and tights (girls) or a black T-shirt and black leggings (boys); hair in a bun; a letter of recommendation; and a list of performing experiences. Folklorico dancers can bring their shoes.
 - **Mariachi & Orchestra:** Your instrument and solo music (if you take lessons), plus a song to sing.
 - **Piano:** A short song to sing. Experienced students should also prepare a piece to play with both hands.
 - **Theatre:** Attire: comfortable clothing and closed-toe shoes you can move in. Materials: a copy of the monologue, a recommendation letter from your theatre or academic teacher, and a water bottle. Optional: a portfolio or list of previous theatre experience (if any) or design/tech interest.
 - **Visual Arts:** A portfolio of your best finished artwork.

- **More information:**
 - [Application information](#)
 - [Dallas ISD Magnet Programs webpage](#)
 - [Greiner Academy website](#)

11. School Contact Information

Ms. Merilyn Peña

Magnet Coordinator | 6th & 8th Grade Health Teacher

Email: mpenachavez@dallasisd.org

W.E. Greiner Exploratory Arts Academy

501 S. Edgefield Ave., Dallas, TX 75208

Main Office: (972) 925-7100

Website: greineracademy.dallasisd.org

Academy Directors

Contact the director directly with questions about their academy or audition dates. To request a campus tour, email Ms. Peña (see above).

Academy	Director	Email
Band	Bremer, Thomas	tbremer@dallasisd.org
Band	Luna, Rene	reluna@dallasisd.org
Choir	Winters, Nychelle	nwinters@dallasisd.org
Dance	Santiago, Koreyci	ksantiago@dallasisd.org
Dance	Savarese, Susan	ssavarese@dallasisd.org
Mariachi & Orchestra	Diaz, Felipe	feldiaz@dallasisd.org
Mariachi & Orchestra	Garcia, Maria	marvargas@dallasisd.org
Piano	Rentowski, Wieslaw	wrentowski@dallasisd.org
Theatre	Powell, Ajuah	ajpowell@dallasisd.org
Visual Arts	Ambriz, Ashley	aambriz@dallasisd.org
Visual Arts	Lee, Michelle	miclee@dallasisd.org
Visual Arts	Pryor, Michelle	mpryor@dallasisd.org