

# Shelby County Schools

## Division of Optional Schools and Advanced Academics

### 2018-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Applications from incoming 1st and 2nd grade applicants who apply to schools that require testing will take additional time to process. Admittance testing begins in March.

#### What happens if I submit my child's Application for Optional Schools with the proper documents but my child does not meet the school's minimum requirements?

- If, at the time of application, the student does not meet the school's entrance requirements, he/she will not be approved to attend the school requested.
- If, at a later date, the student's attendance, skills and behaviors, conduct, and/or academic performance improve and he/she meets the entrance requirements of the school requested, he/she may re-apply.
- If, at a later date, the NWEA MAP Spring 2018 or the TNReady Spring 2018 test scores become available and meet the test score requirements, the student may re-apply.
- If, at a later date, the student's family chooses to have the applicant evaluated by a licensed psychological examiner using an appropriate assessment, and the student meets the test requirements, then he/she may re-apply.
- The student's new application will receive a new electronic date and time stamp.

#### What if, at the end of the school year, a student who was approved did not maintain entrance requirements for the specific program?

Final approval for enrollment in the Optional Program is reserved until the end of the school year. Final report cards must be submitted and reviewed by the school. The student's second semester grades, conduct, skills and behaviors and attendance must meet the school's entrance requirements.

#### If I receive an Optional transfer to an Optional School, is transportation provided?

No. If an Optional transfer is approved, transportation must be provided by the parent/legal guardian.

#### What if I live in an SCS zone when my child is accepted but we move to an area not zoned to SCS when school begins?

Newly approved applicants who are zoned to SCS must continue to reside within the SCS zone to maintain an approved status in schools where space availability is limited.

#### Are students who are not zoned to SCS eligible to transfer to SCS through the Optional Schools Application Process?

Yes. SCS welcomes all interested parents and legal guardians to complete an online Application for Optional Schools regardless of residence. However, applications for students zoned to SCS will be given first priority, and if spaces remain in Optional Programs, non-SCS residents may be awarded transfers if requirements are met. Tuition may apply.



#### What are Optional Schools?

One of the most exciting choices in Shelby County Schools is the Optional Program. Parents may choose from 46 theme-based programs tailored to their children's special talents and abilities. Optional Schools offer programs at the elementary, middle and senior high levels throughout the county. These programs enrich, supplement and broaden the standard school curriculum.

Some Optional programs offer more challenging or additional courses of study. Some use different methods in unique learning environments. Others focus on developing students' talents in particular areas. What all Optional Schools have in common is that they foster an environment of high expectations where children will learn beside classmates who are similarly driven to succeed.

#### Who can transfer into an Optional Program?

Qualified students can transfer into an Optional Program when the applicants meet all of the entrance requirements of the school's Optional Program and space is available.

#### How do I apply online?

The Optional Schools Application Process is completely online for new and returning students. No paper applications will be printed or accepted, and no lines or camping out will be permitted. Parents can easily complete and submit an online application from any personal computer, tablet or smartphone (with Internet access) that supports online forms.

The online application portal will be accessible on the SCS website, [www.scsk12.org](http://www.scsk12.org), beginning at 10 a.m. on Monday, January 29, 2018. A valid email address is required in order to submit the application online. You will receive an email confirmation with the date and time of your application submission.

#### How do I participate in the process if I do not have a computer with Internet access?

For parents/legal guardians without personal Internet access, computers and on-site assistance will be available on the first day of the application period, January 29, 2018, at the following sites:

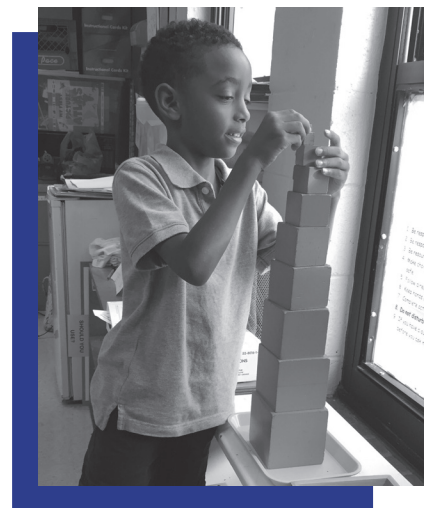
- SCS Welcome Center (2687 Avery Ave.)
- SCS Coe Auditorium (160 S. Hollywood)
- SCS Grays Creek Admin. Office (2800 Grays Creek, Arlington)
- SCS Northeast Regional Office (920 N. Highland St.)
- All SCS schools
- Public libraries

#### When is the first day to apply for an Optional transfer?

Online applications may be submitted on Monday, January 29, 2018, beginning at 10 a.m.

#### What documents are needed in order to apply for an Optional transfer?

If the applicant is a current SCS student, SCS already has the required documents on file. Once a current SCS student's online application is submitted, no further action is needed to finalize the application.



Parents of non-SCS students must submit the following documents AFTER submitting the online application:

### 1. Nationally normed achievement test scores

- Test results in TCAP TNReady English/Language Arts and the TCAP TNReady Mathematics assessments; Total Reading/Reading Composite and Total Mathematics/Mathematics Composite of the NWEA MAP and/or another nationally normed achievement test. Acceptable tests must be dated Spring 2017 or later.
- Other acceptable tests for high schools include the TCAP End of Course test or another nationally normed assessment, including the ACT, PSAT or SAT (Reading/Critical Reading and Mathematics), with the assessment being administered no more than one year prior to the date of application for Optional Schools.
- The only acceptable achievement tests from licensed psychological examiners are the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, 2nd or 3rd Edition (KFTEA-II or III) or the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, 2nd or 3rd Edition (WIAT-II or III), with composite scores in Reading and Mathematics on grade-level norms. Entrance requirements vary by school.

2. A copy of a current comprehensive report card including grades, skills and behaviors, conduct and attendance is required.

3. An original copy of the birth certificate is required for Kindergarten applicants.

All documents are required from non-SCS applicants as part of the application process. Documents must be submitted within 10 days of the online application to:

**Division of Optional Schools and Advanced Academics**  
160 S. Hollywood, Coe 106  
Memphis, TN 38112

### If my child is already attending a school on an Optional transfer, do I have to apply again?

Applications for Optional Schools must be renewed annually.

- Students are eligible for renewal transfers to the same school if they remain in that specific school's Optional program all year and maintain the school's renewal requirements.
- Renewal applications are available online at:
  - o [tinyurl.com/RenewMyOptionalTransfer2018](http://tinyurl.com/RenewMyOptionalTransfer2018) (English)
  - o [tinyurl.com/RenovaMiAplicacionOpcional2018](http://tinyurl.com/RenovaMiAplicacionOpcional2018) (Spanish)
- If a student wishes to attend a different Optional school, a new application must be submitted online for the chosen school.

### What is the order in which new applications are processed?

Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, within priority categories, unless there are more applications than spaces available. If applications exceed spaces, the first 80 percent are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, and 20 percent are chosen by lottery. \*For all Optional schools, final acceptance is contingent upon review of students' second semester/final report card.

### When is the first day to apply for an Optional transfer?

- Sibling Preference is available for qualified students who are residents zoned to SCS with a sibling who is in the Optional Program at the same school and maintaining the Optional requirements. A sibling is a brother or sister who lives at the same address. Slots for qualified siblings are held for 10 working days. February 12, 2018 is the last day for sibling preference.
- Qualified students who are residents of SCS

- Qualified siblings who are non-residents of SCS with a sibling who is in the Optional Program at the same school and maintaining the Optional requirements
- Non-SCS residents
- Non-Shelby County residents
- Out-of-state residents

*\*There are two exceptions: Maxine Smith STEAM Academy and East High School T-STEM reserve half of their available spaces for qualified students who live within their designated zone through February 12, 2018.*

### When there are more applications than available spaces, we use the following procedures to process applications according to guidelines for 80-percent first-come, first-served selection (subject to sibling and proximity preference) and 20-percent lottery selection:

If any Optional Program has more applications than available space on February 2, 2018, a lottery is implemented. Eighty (80) percent of the space available in the oversubscribed programs will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis (subject to sibling and proximity preference) by students zoned to SCS. The names of all remaining SCS zoned applicants will be placed in a random, computer-generated lottery. The remaining 20 percent of the spaces will be filled by applicants selected from the computer-generated lottery (within priority categories). Please note that only students zoned to SCS will be included in the lottery.

The lottery will be held on February 19, 2018 in the SCS Coe Board of Education Auditorium and is open to the public. This lottery will apply only to those schools with more applicants on February 2, 2018 (by 11:59 p.m.) than available space. Applicants who are not selected by the lottery will be assigned to a waiting list according to the numerical order of online application submission.

### May I apply for more than one Optional School per child?

Yes, parents may apply for two Optional schools. The online application process offers opportunities for a parent/legal guardian to list a first choice and a second choice for each child. If you choose to apply for two schools, please note the following:

- Parents are not required to select two schools.
- If the student qualifies for the first choice and space is available, the student will be approved for his/her first choice school. The second choice school will no longer be valid.
- If the student does not qualify for his/her first choice but does qualify for his/her second choice and space is available, then the student will be approved for his/her second choice. The student will not be placed on a waiting list for the first choice.
- If the student qualifies for both schools but neither school has space, he/she will automatically be placed on the waiting list for his/her first preference only. Parents will be notified that their child has been placed on a waiting list, which will be maintained until 20 days after the first day of the 2018-19 school year. Parents will have the option either to keep their child on the waiting list or to apply for another school that has space.
- If the student applies for another school, his/her name will be removed from the waiting list. If the student does not qualify for his/her first or second choice, the student may restart the application process for a new school. The new application will receive a new electronic date and time stamp at the time the new application is submitted.

### When will I find out if my child has been accepted into an Optional School?

The Division of Optional Schools and Advanced Academics staff will attempt to notify parents within six to eight weeks from the time the application is submitted. If an answer is needed sooner, please contact the requested Optional School or the Division of Optional Schools and Advanced Academics staff in writing.