

Humanities and Communication Magnet Program
Eastern Middle School
300 University Blvd. E
Silver Spring, MD 20901
301-650-6654

Frequently Asked Questions

At tonight's open house, you and your child will hear information on Eastern Middle School's Humanities and Communication Magnet Program. You will also see presentations by teachers in the program's three focus areas: English, Social Studies, and Media. The following is to help with questions you might have regarding your child's experience at Eastern Middle School outside of his or her magnet classes.

1. Does attending the Humanities and Communication Magnet Program mean that my child will not receive instruction in math or science?

Absolutely not! Students in the Humanities magnet take the same math and science classes as students throughout middle schools in Montgomery County. Depending on what math class students take in 5th grade, they will be placed in Math 6, Applied Investigations into Math (IM) or Algebra 1. In Science, they will be placed in Science 6 or Advanced Science 6.

2. Is the Eastern magnet program a "school within a school"?

No! Students in the magnet are fully incorporated into Eastern's student body. They are assigned to non-magnet classes (Math, Science, PE, and electives); eat lunch; and participate in extracurricular activities with their peers in the comprehensive program.

3. How much homework do magnet students have each day?

Students in the magnet program will have homework most nights and typically spend more time on homework than their peers. Much of the homework in the magnet classes consists of assignments that are open-ended, which can take longer to complete than traditional homework. In addition, magnet students often exceed teachers' requirements and expectations for homework due to their interest in the subject. Teachers in the magnet program collaborate to ensure that the volume of homework is reasonable and appropriate.

4. What electives does Eastern offer?

Students can choose between taking a language (Spanish or French), orchestra, band, chorus, or the arts rotation. Sixth grade students can also choose to take an accelerated literature class called **Literature in the Humanities**. It is recommended that 6th grade students in the Humanities magnet program take Literature in the Humanities. In order to allow students more elective options, Eastern also offers an after-school band class for credit and a Friday afternoon orchestra club.

5. Eastern is far from my house. Will I be expected to drive my child to school each day?

Montgomery County Public Schools' Transportation Department provides buses to transport magnet students to Eastern and Takoma Park middle schools. The bus stops are at schools, community centers, libraries, or other central locations. These stops might not be as close to a student's home as their elementary school bus stop was, and parents might need to arrange transportation to the bus stop. The morning buses bring students to Eastern and continue on to Takoma Park. In the afternoon, magnet students board shuttle buses at Eastern and are transported to Montgomery Blair High School. At Blair, they transfer to the bus that takes them closest to their desired destination (home, after care, or other location). Magnet students may take any magnet bus that works for their family. Some parents choose to drive their children to Eastern; others arrange car pools with other families nearby. The magnet program will provide a directory of students prior to the start of school.

6. Can magnet students participate in extracurricular activities?

Yes! Eastern offers a wide range of after-school activities in sports, drama, academic support, physical fitness, and many others. MCPS Transportation provides buses on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays to enable students to participate in these activities. Magnet students board shuttle buses at 4:20. The buses transport the students to Blair High School, where they catch buses that take them near their desired destination.

7. My child doesn't know anyone else who will attend Eastern. Are there any orientation programs planned to help with the transition?

Your child is not alone! Many of the accepted students do not know anyone else in the program. To ease the transition, the magnet program offers a week-long Summer Media Institute five times during the summer (see below). This half-day program familiarizes students with the program's equipment and computer software. More importantly, it introduces students to some of their classmates, so they can see a familiar face at the start of school. And remember: all 6th graders are "the new kid" on the first day of middle school!

8. How can we sign our child up for the Summer Media Institute?

The magnet program will send all the details of the Summer Media Institute to the parents of incoming 6th grade Humanities Magnet students just as soon as MCPS approves the summer program. In the past, the week-long program has been offered over five weeks, usually starting in July. The program runs from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. No transportation is provided, but we do give parents a list of other students in the class so that they might be able to organize car pools. Parents are invited to the class on the last day to see the students' video productions.

9. Can my child visit Eastern during a school day or shadow a magnet student?

Unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate requests for tours or visits. Instead, Eastern schedules tours throughout the summer for incoming 6th graders and other new students. During these tours, students become familiar with the school's layout and practice operating a locker. Information about the tours will be provided to parents by early summer.

We know you probably have many more questions than we have answered here. Please feel free to email or call Mr. Matthew Kerwin, Magnet Coordinator (Matthew_F_Kerwin@mcpsmd.org) or Mrs. Leslie Goldstein, Magnet Secretary (Leslie_M_Goldstein@mcpsmd.org).