

LOOKING TOWARD HIGH SCHOOL

There are ten Chesterfield County Specialty Centers and two Regional Governor's Schools to which you can apply in the fall of your 8th grade year. Each has a different focus and will provide you with unique experiences. Each Specialty Center or Governor's School requires an application (including an essay) and letters of recommendation. Students must submit a separate application to each school to which they apply. Each school or center may have different requirements regarding classes required for admission, the teachers from whom you should get recommendations, or other specific requirements for submitting an application to that program. Most of the schools also require students to come to the school in January or February for testing, an interview, an audition or portfolio review, or some combination of these.

SOME TIPS...

- **Go to one of the two Specialty Center Fairs hosted by the county in October of your 7th grade year.**

The county hosts two information fairs each fall. There are two dates but they are the same program, so pick the date and location that works best for you. This is a great chance to gather information about all of the high school choices at one place and time. Each of the specialty centers in Chesterfield County and the two Governor's schools are represented there. This enables you to start thinking about the programs that might be of interest to you. This also gives you the opportunity to ensure that you take any necessary classes in 8th grade that might be required or recommended for the schools in which you are interested.

- **Look at every school.**

Don't dismiss a school based on its title. Read about each center and what the program has to offer. Some program titles are misleading. The Mathematics and Science program at Clover Hill is a prime example of this -- it is a much more well-rounded and interdisciplinary program than the name would imply.

- **Start keeping track of information you will need for your application NOW.**

You will need to list on your applications things for each of the following 4 areas:

- Club memberships and/or team activities
- Leadership roles
- Community service (some applications may ask for the number of hours)
- Awards and other interests

You can list in-school and out-of-school information as long as you did it during your middle school years. You can only list a few things on your applications, but the more items you have from which to choose the better! You might find that you will want to list different items on different applications based on the school to which you are applying.

➤ **Make sure that you have something to write in each of the areas.**
You do not want any of the four sections blank on your application!! This might be a good time to get involved in a new activity at school or in your community!

➤ **Participate in a variety of experiences.**
Even if you have some things to write down for each of the 4 sections, make sure they are not all related to the same area. The committees like to see that you are well-rounded. All of your entries should not be centered on the same activity or sport.

➤ **Remember that the most important grading periods (for the high school application process) are the 2nd semester of 7th grade and the 1st semester of 8th grade.**
You should always keep your grades up, but these are the semester grades that the schools use to determine your grade point average for application purposes. Be sure that you are especially focused during those periods!

➤ **Open Houses**
In the fall of your 8th grade year, parents and students will have the opportunity to visit the Specialty Centers in which you are interested for an evening open house. During October and November each center has an open house for its program and you may attend as many of these as you like.

➤ **Shadow Day**
Once you are accepted to a Specialty Center, many programs will give you the opportunity to spend a day (or a portion of a day) at the school with students who are currently enrolled in the program. If the school offers this option, the information will most likely come with the acceptance letter. Shadow Day is a wonderful opportunity for you to visit the school and get a feel for what it might be like to be a student in that program. These days are excused absences from school and are scheduled before acceptance letters are due.

➤ **8th Grade Application Timeline**

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| October-November | Attend Information Fairs and Open Houses Work on applications and request recommendations |
| December | Applications due |
| January-February | Testing, interviews, auditions, portfolio reviews (Requirements will vary based on the schools to which you apply.) |
| March | Acceptance letters mailed |
| March-April | Shadow Days Return reply forms to programs |