



Exploring GATE Program Options:

Schools for Advanced
Studies (SAS) &
Gifted/Highly Gifted
Magnet

CHOICES

Los Angeles Unified | 2026-2027



October 16, 2025

Presented by
Gifted/Talented Programs & Student Integration Services
Office of Special Education and Specialized Programs



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Welcome to the Opening 2025–26 GATE/SAS Parent/Family Webinar

The purpose of the bimonthly GATE/SAS parent/family education webinars is to inform families of gifted, talented, and advanced students, including those at Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS) and Gifted Magnets, of available District GATE educational options and how to support the developmental needs of gifted/talented learners. Sessions will cover topics of interest to families such as social-emotional needs of gifted students, differentiated instruction, and extended learning at home.

Flyers will be posted on the “Families” page of the Gifted/Talented Programs website, gate.lausd.org. Families will receive Blackboard Connect notifications regarding GATE/SAS parent/family webinars throughout the 2025–26 academic year. No advance registration is required.



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Song Lee, District Coordinator

Student Integration Services



integration.lausd.org
(213) 241-4177 (option 1)
choices@lausd.net



Kevin Kilpatrick, District Coordinator

Gifted/Talented Programs



gate.lausd.org
(213) 241-4177 (option 3)
GATE@lausd.net



Webinar Agenda

- GATE Clustering and Instruction
- Components of All K-12 GATE Programs
- Los Angeles Unified Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program Options
- Difference Between Gifted Magnet and Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)
- Overview of Magnet Programs (Including Priority Points)
- Overview of SAS (Including Single Gender Academies and Individualized Honors Programs)
- Verification of Eligibility for Gifted Magnet and SAS
- Choices Timeline
- Q&A



Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Programs

The purpose of this presentation is to learn more about District GATE programs, with an emphasis on **Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS), Gifted Magnets, and Highly Gifted Magnets.**

All of these GATE program options are available through the Choices application process at <https://Apply.lausd.net>. The on-time 2026-2027 Choices application process has been open since Wednesday, October 1, 2025 and continue until Friday, November 14, 2025. The late application opens Monday, February 2, 2026.

Note: ALL K-12 Los Angeles Unified schools/programs offer GATE services and support, include local schools of residence and Choices programs. For more information about gifted/talented identification or instruction at a specific school, please contact the school directly. You may also read the school's Annual GATE Report.



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What is GATE?

GATE is a service not a place. Gifted/advanced learners require specialized learning experiences and support to address their unique academic and social-emotional needs every day, during the regular school day.





GATE Clustering in ALL K-12 Schools

- All school site GATE programs must be planned and organized as differentiated learning experiences within the regular school day, i.e., **all-day differentiation**.
- To support student access to a differentiated educational program, District policy requires school sites to **cluster identified and verified gifted students** in a well-defined way and to provide a differentiated educational program.
- Clustering is the intentional placement of a minimum number of identified gifted students per class (elementary level: five students; secondary level: 15 students).
- In a Gifted or Highly Gifted Magnet, all students meet eligibility criteria since they must apply through the Choices process (and eligibility is processed before selection). SAS classes include resident and Choices students; best practice is that all students in SAS classes meet eligibility criteria, but resident student eligibility may be determined after enrollment.
- GATE cluster grouping is a research-based, effective, and efficient means for schools to provide more challenging coursework, giving gifted/high ability learners daily access to advanced content and new learning, as well as providing students with an academic peer group in core subjects.



GATE Instructional Information for Families

gate.lausd.org >>> Instruction

Teaching and learning for gifted and advanced learners requires differentiation of content, process, product, and learning environment to address their unique and complex cognitive and social-emotional needs.



Gifted and advanced learners need to be challenged during the regular school day through daily, standards-based instruction that includes depth, complexity, novelty, and acceleration—not as enrichment, but as an essential part of their learning.



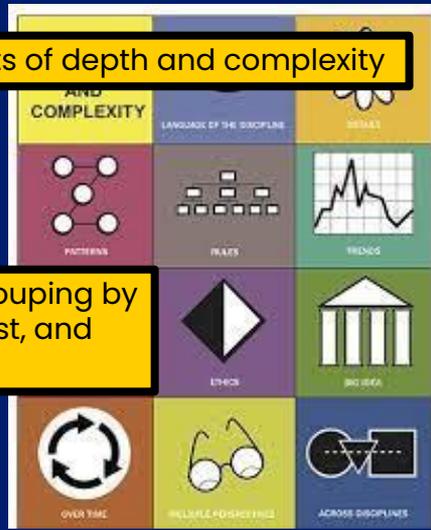


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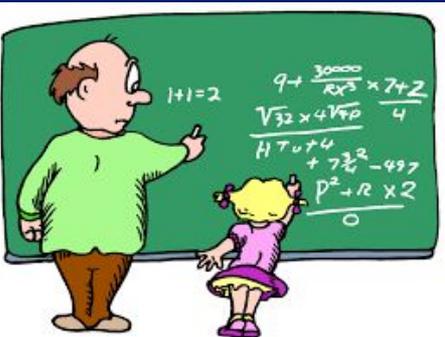
What Might You See in a GATE Classroom?



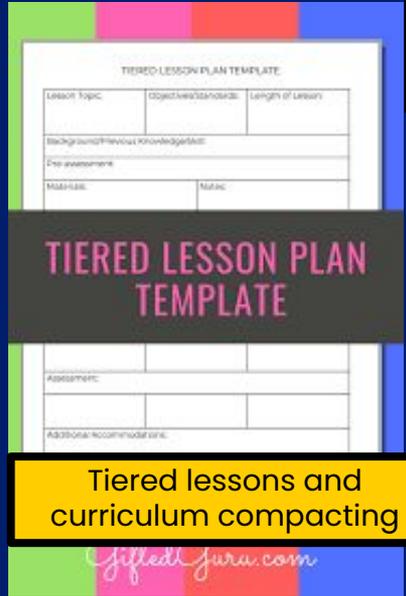
Prompts of depth and complexity



GATE clustering and flexible grouping by academic readiness, interest, and learning style



Accelerated pacing, content, questioning, and resources



Tiered lessons and curriculum compacting

Project Based Learning and independent study in areas of strength or interest



Support for social-emotional needs, e.g., perfectionism, asynchrony, anxiety, imposter syndrome



Novel products, interest/learning centers, and student choice



Who can access advanced programs?

- A. Are formally identified as gifted/highly gifted
- B. Demonstrate high academic achievement by exceeding standardized test score criteria *
- C. Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their primary language and the strong potential to perform above grade level in academic subjects *
- D. Demonstrate interest, commitment, and motivation to participate in advanced coursework, i.e., open access, “at promise” students *

* Can be verified at the school site for most schools/programs

A

Highly Gifted Magnets

B

**Early College Programs
Individualized Honors Programs (IHP)**

A, B, C

**Gifted Magnets
Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)**

A, B, C, D

**Advanced Placement (AP)
Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
GATE Cluster Classes in ALL Schools (K-5)
Honors Classes in ALL Schools (6-12)
International Baccalaureate (IB)
Middle College Programs
Dual Enrollment**



School Choice in the Los Angeles Unified 2022–26 Strategic Plan

Pillar 4: Operational Effectiveness – District of Choice (4D)

“Improve data-informed decisions to expand learning options such as magnet, dual language, specialized career pathway programs, Schools for Advanced Studies, and virtual and independent learning options, based on student needs.”

LAUSD Measures of Success

By 2026, we will:

- Increase the annual percentage of students enrolled who are new to the District to at least 16%
- Increase enrollment in thematic and choice learning options to at least 65% of all students



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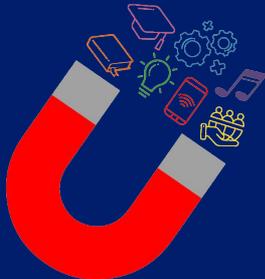
Highly Gifted Magnet

- Coordinated by Student Integration Services
- Designed to meet the needs of highly gifted students
- Available to students who are identified as **Highly Gifted (HG)** by scoring at the **99.9 percentile rank** on an Intellectual Ability assessment administered by a Los Angeles Unified designated GATE psychologist OR **Highly Gifted Applicable (HGA)** by scoring at the **99.5 to 99.8 percentile rank**



Gifted Magnet

- Coordinated by Student Integration Services
- Designed to meet the needs of gifted/high ability learners in multiple categories
- Available to students who meet identification or verification criteria



Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)

- Coordinated by Gifted/Talented Programs, Advanced Learning Options
- Designed to meet the needs of gifted/high ability learners in multiple categories
- Available to students who meet identification or verification criteria





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You may be thinking... but which is better?

Gifted Magnets and Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS) are **BOTH** appropriate educational options for gifted/high ability learners. They were designed for different purposes but both provide high-quality GATE differentiated instruction. We encourage you to use the **School Explorer** at <https://explore.lausd.org> or contact the schools directly to learn more.

Please note that **ALL** K-12 District schools/programs, including local schools of residence, must offer GATE services and support. District GATE programs, including Gifted Magnets and SAS sites, are designed to meet the needs of all types of gifted learners. In addition to high-achieving students, each school must ensure equitable access for creative thinkers, students with leadership abilities, able-underachieving learners, English learners, standard English learners, and other diverse students groups.



What are the Differences? PURPOSE

Integration

- Magnet Programs are court-ordered voluntary integration opportunities
- Gifted Magnets are one type of magnet program designed to meet the needs of gifted/high ability learners



Demonstration Site

- SAS is a designation given to resident K-12 LAUSD schools for exemplary implementation of GATE services and support
- These demonstration sites share innovative, equitable, and effective GATE practices Districtwide





What are the Differences? LEVELS

Grades
1-12

Grades
K-12

What are the Differences? DESIGNATION

Continuous

Once designated, the school or center remains a Gifted Magnet

Five-Year Cycle

School must undergo a rigorous application process every 5 years to obtain or maintain the SAS designation





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What are the Differences? PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recommended

Teachers and administrators are encouraged to participate in GATE professional development annually



Required

Teachers and administrators participate in GATE professional development annually in a minimum of 16 hours for teachers and 4 hours for administrators





What are the Differences? APPLICATION & SELECTION

Priority Points

- All students apply through the Choices application process
- Student selection is based on magnet priority points

No Priority Points

- Only students residing outside the SAS site's residential boundaries apply through the Choices application process
- Resident students do not need to apply (exceptions: IHP & Single Gender Academies)





What are the Similarities?

Eligibility

- Applicants must meet 1 of 3 eligibility criteria (p. 7-8 Choices brochure)
- Gifted Magnets and SAS sites share identical eligibility criteria and verification processes

Boundaries

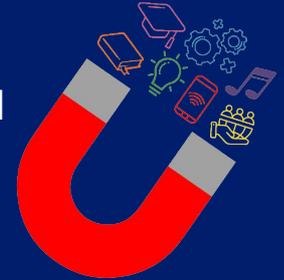
- Open to students who reside within LAUSD boundaries
 - Exception: IHP and SAS Single Gender Academies are open to students who reside outside LAUSD boundaries

Instruction

- Teachers provide differentiated instruction, including depth, complexity, novelty, and acceleration

Transportation

- Transportation may be available.
- Elementary 1-mile radius. Secondary 2-mile radius
- Please contact Transportation Services for information at 213-580-2900





Student Eligibility Criteria

Applicants to SAS and Gifted Magnets must meet ONE of the following eligibility criteria:

- A. Be **identified as gifted** by Los Angeles Unified in the Intellectual Ability, High Achievement Ability, Specific Academic Ability, Creative Ability or Leadership Ability category OR
- B. Meet the standardized **test score criteria** from the most recent year as outlined in the Choices brochure or at <https://Choices.LAUSD.net> (if applicable) OR
- C. Demonstrate the ability to meet ALL FOUR **critical thinking and problem-solving skills** in their primary language and demonstrate the ability *or strong potential* to perform two years above grade level in academic subjects; SAS kindergarten applicants must also meet the SAS kindergarten-specific criteria included on the *Verification of Eligibility (SAS Kindergarten)* form



Gifted/Talented Identification (Criterion A)

Intellectual Ability

Designated GATE Psychologist
2nd semester kindergarten and above

High Achievement Ability

Automated based on test scores
and grades
Grade 2 and above

Creative Ability

Portfolio
Grade 2 and above

Specific Academic Ability

Automated based on test scores
and grades
Grade 5 and above

Leadership Ability

Portfolio
Grade 2 and above

Visual Arts Ability

Portfolio and Demonstration
Grade 2 and above

Performing Arts Ability

Audition
Grade 2 and above

Identification in these 2 (of the 7) identification categories require the school to provide instructional opportunities to develop the student's talent and provide priority to the Saturday Conservatory of Fine Arts.

Identification in these 5 (of the 7) identification categories meet criteria for placement into gifted cluster and eligibility for enrollment at Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS) or Gifted Magnets.



What is the difference between gifted identification and verification of eligibility?

Gifted/Talented Identification (Criterion A):

- Formal evaluation process conducted by Gifted/Talented Programs, Advanced Learning Options
- Allows all K-12 District schools to meet a student's needs in terms of instruction and class placement
- Valid until graduation

Verification of Eligibility for Program Participation (Criteria B and C):

- Recommendation provided by the school of attendance based on academic evidence
- Determines program eligibility for the Choices selection process
- Valid for the application year only (does not roll over from year to year)



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Applicants are not required to be tested or identified as gifted to apply for Schools for Advanced Studies or Gifted Magnets. Students can be “verified” as eligible by the administrator at their school of attendance based on criterion C. To ensure equitable access, all criteria carry equal weight in the Choices selection process.



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How is eligibility verified?



District Applicants (including Virtual Academy)

Verification of Eligibility form is NOT required for applicants currently enrolled in a District school; in **January 2026**, the District will conduct an **online verification of eligibility process**.



Non-District Applicants

Verification of Eligibility form is required for applicants currently enrolled in a private school, independent charter or non-LAUSD school; form is at Choices.LAUSD.net and must be submitted, *in addition to the Choices application*, **by December 5, 2025**.



Applicants Not Enrolled in School or attending in-home private school

Parents/guardians of applicants who are NOT enrolled in school or attend in-home private school must contact GATE@lausd.net for adjusted verification procedures **by December 5, 2025**.



Verification of Eligibility

- If a student is applying to a new school/program (i.e., is applying to change schools) and/or matriculating from the 5th/6th or 8th grade, the student must be re-verified by the current school of attendance; this includes students who applied for SAS or Gifted Magnets the previous year and were verified but not selected
- Verification status does not roll over from year to year unless the student remains in the same school/program
- The recommendation submitted by the administrator is final



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MAGNET PROGRAMS
STUDENT INTEGRATION SERVICES



What are Magnet Programs?

- Voluntary integration opportunities available to all students who live within the Los Angeles Unified boundary
- 334 magnet programs with theme-based instruction
- All students, including English learners, Standard English learners, students with disabilities, and gifted/talented students are encouraged to submit a Choices application



CSE

CAREER AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CES

CENTER FOR ENRICHED STUDIES

LA

LIBERAL ARTS

STEM

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING/MATH

NM

NEW MEDIA

G/HG

GIFTED +/HIGHLY GIFTED

VAPA

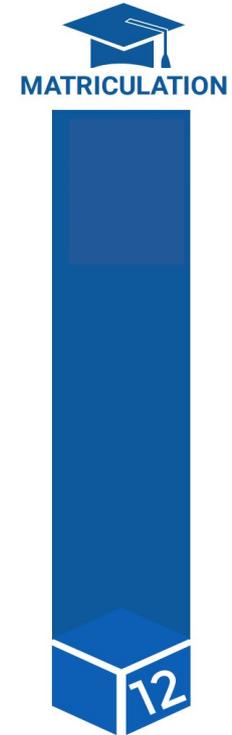
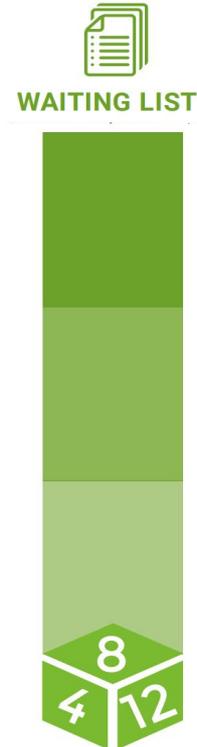
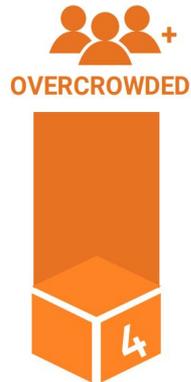
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

- Magnet Priority Points
- Ethnic balance
- Ensure home address is correct on the application and the District's computer system
- Address on file determines eligibility and Magnet Priority Points

Magnet Priority Point System

STUDENT
INTEGRATION

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Applicants may earn up to 23 points maximum



Sibling

Points are assigned if the sibling is attending the applicant's 1st choice school.

Siblings must be associated in the same parent's Apply account and reside at the same address at the time of application.



Overcrowded

Applicants whose 2024-2025 resident Los Angeles Unified school is designated as overcrowded by District criteria receive 4 points.

Points are not cumulative; they are assigned yearly.



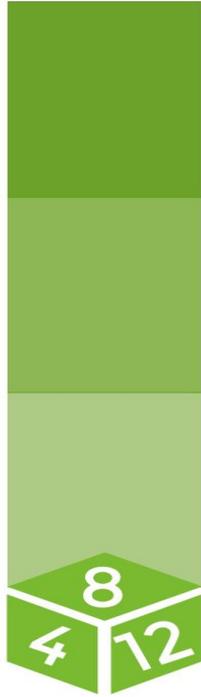
PHBAO

Applicants whose 2025–2026 resident L.A. Unified school is designated as PHBAO by the District, receive 4 points.

Points are not cumulative; they are assigned yearly.



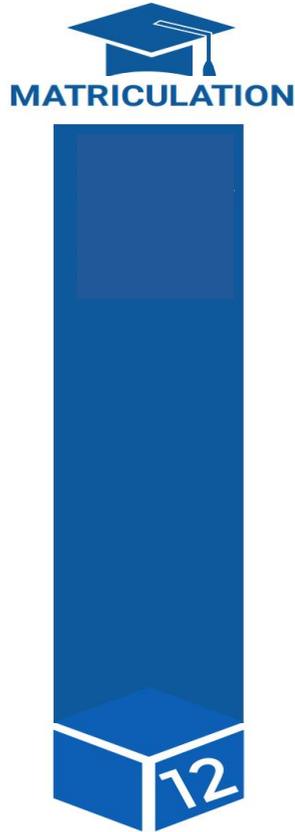
WAITING LIST



Waiting List

Applicants who remained on a valid on-time magnet waiting list receive 4 points for the following year. Points can accumulate for the prior three consecutive years for a maximum of 12 points.

If an applicant on a waiting list is offered magnet placement, ALL waiting list points are removed.



Matriculation

Applicants who have completed the highest grade level in a magnet program and apply to continue in another magnet program at the next level, receive 12 matriculation points.

Cannot be combined with waiting list points.



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Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)

K-12 schools receive the SAS designation for exemplary practices in meeting the unique academic and social-emotional needs of gifted/ advanced learners.



gate.lausd.org

Gifted/Talented Programs

Advanced Learning Options

Office of the Chief of Special Education and Specialized Programs



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Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)

Gifted/Talented Programs

Choices/SAS Phone: (213) 241-4177 (Option 3)

GATE Phone: (213) 241-6500

GATE Email: GATE@lausd.net

GATE Website: gate.lausd.org

Verification of Eligibility Information:

Choices.LAUSD.net

Verification Email:

giftedverification@lausd.net

SAS demonstration sites receive the SAS designation for their exemplary Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) implementation. A formal application is not required for qualified students who reside within school boundaries. An SAS site may accept Los Angeles Unified students who reside outside of the school's attendance boundaries (or outside of the District for Single Gender Academies and Individualized Honors Programs) after all qualified students who reside within school boundaries have been accommodated. Refer to Choices.LAUSD.net (click "Who is eligible?") or the Choices brochure for detailed information.



Applicants to SAS Kindergarten

- SAS begins in **kindergarten**
- To be eligible for SAS kindergarten for the following year, applicants must be verified by their current school of attendance (preschool or TK) as meeting the **four critical thinking and problem-solving skills (criterion C)** AND at least 10 of 20 items on the **SAS Kindergarten Readiness Checklist**
- If students are not enrolled in preschool or TK, there is an alternate verification process
- Detailed information about verification of eligibility for SAS kindergarten applicants is available on the Gifted/Talented Programs website, **gate.lausd.org** (select Program Options and SAS)
- **Eligibility Exemplars** are available in English and Spanish to support families and preschool/TK educators with the characteristics of giftedness in young students



Designated SAS Sites Can Be...

**Local
Schools of
Residence**



Resident:
Enroll at school
Non-resident:
Apply through Choices
(SAS);
verification required

**Affiliated
Charter Schools**



Resident:
Enroll at school
Non-resident:
Apply through Choices
(AFC);
verification not required
before selection

**Single Gender
Academies**



All:
Apply through
Choices (SAS)

**Zones of
Choice Schools**



Reside within Zone:
Must select during
ZOC process
**Does Not Reside within
Zone:**
Apply through Choices
(SAS)

SAS Single Gender Academies

NEW TO SAS!

A rigorous STEM-focused academic program in a unique single gender educational setting

Applicants must meet one of the three SAS criteria **AND** voluntarily **commit to the expectations of a rigorous, STEM-focused academic program** in a single gender learning environment.

- District and non-district applicants may apply
- Grades 6-12 (Girls Academic Leadership Academy, Dr. Michelle King School for STEM, and Boys Academic Leadership Academy)



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Individualized Honors Programs

NEW TO SAS!

A high honors pathway for students performing two to three grade levels above in core content areas.

Applicants must meet one of the three SAS criteria **AND** receive a qualifying score on interdisciplinary **IHP assessment** given **in-person in January**.

- District and non-district applicants may apply
- Grades 6–8 (Walter Reed Middle School and Mark Twain Middle School)



SAS Informational Videos are Available Online



SAS Application Tutorial

Choices

<https://Apply.LAUSD.net>

Select **Need Help?** and **SAS**



SAS Application Scenarios

Choices

<https://Apply.LAUSD.net>

Select **Need Help?** and **SAS**



SAS Overview

Gifted/Talented Programs

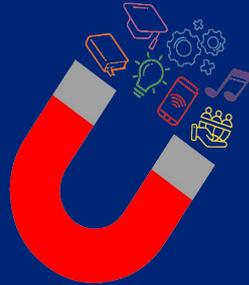
gate.lausd.org

Select **Program Options** and **SAS**



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Choices Application





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When Do I Apply?



On-Time Application Window
October 1 to November 14, 2025



Late Application Window Opens
February 2, 2026



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How Do I Apply?

Online at
[Apply.lausd.net](https://apply.lausd.net)



Online applicants will receive a
letter via their Parent Account



Paper applications
are available



Paper applicants will receive a
letter via U.S. mail





Choices Process

First Choice

- If selected, system will place student on school active list, 2nd and 3rd choices will not be processed and no points are accumulated for 2nd and 3rd choices.
- If NOT selected, system will proceed to 2nd choice.

Second Choice - Optional

- If selected, system will place student on school active list for 2nd choice school, 1st and 3rd choice schools will not be processed and no points are accumulated for 1st and 3rd choices.
- If NOT selected, system will look at 3rd choice.

Third Choice - Optional

- If selected, system will place student on school active list for 3rd choice, no points will be accumulated for 1st and 2nd choice schools.
- If NOT selected, the 3rd choice will not be processed and the student will be placed on waiting list for 1st Choice school ONLY based on their Magnet Priority Points.



Applying to Multiple SAS Options

You may apply to as many SAS Affiliated Charter Schools (Affiliated Charter section), SAS Single Gender Academies (SAS section), and Individualized Honors Programs (SAS Section) as you would like. These selections do not impact general SAS choices or each other.

Up to 3 SAS sites
(1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice - optional)



As many SAS
Affiliated
Charter
Schools



As many SAS
Single Gender
Academies



As many
Individualized
Honors
Programs





Choices Timeline

DECEMBER

Confirmation
Correction
Notification

- Confirm information
- Make corrections
- If you did not receive notification, call Help Desk at (213) 241-4177 or Choices@lausd.net

FEBRUARY

Program Eligibility
Notification

- No action required
- Eligibility does not mean selection
- Contact the school of attendance with questions about eligibility

MARCH

Selection/Waiting
List Notification

- **Selected** - Accept/decline online or contact the school by the deadline. All declines are final
- **Waiting List** - No action required



Choices Programs Selection Process

- All Choices programs run their selection process independently
- Students may get selected to several Choices programs
- Students may only accept one Choice program
- Accepting an offer at one Choices program will **auto-decline** any other **selected** programs
- Accepting a Choices program **will not influence** or affect any other **Wait or Late List** status



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Thank you for attending our GATE/SAS Parent/Family Webinar

The presentation recording and slide deck (English/Spanish) will be posted on the “Families” page of the Gifted/Talented Programs website, gate.lausd.org, in approximately one week.

If you have further questions, please contact (213) 241-6500 or GATE@lausd.net.

Apply online at
Apply.LAUSD.net

