Merit Awards Program
2024 Application Packet

DEADLINE EXTENDED: Friday, November 10, 2023 by 1 PM ET
~~DEADLINE:~~ **Tuesday, November 7, 2023 by 8 PM ET**

Must be a PAID 2023-2024 MSA Member by Wednesday, November 1, 2023
Posted September 13, 2023

GUIDELINES

You must follow the Criteria & Requirements outline to complete the narrative section of the application. Special attention should be given to "describe and highlight" those exemplary and unique aspects of the magnet school which are above and beyond program components found in traditional, non-magnet schools. For example, "having an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA)" is not considered a unique level of parent and community involvement specific to magnets. However, having a Friends of (School Name) that organizes parent volunteers for activities throughout the year is. Please spell out all abbreviations and acronyms, EXAMPLE: Supplemental Educational Services (SES).

Be sure to read all information carefully for the award appropriate to you.

Whole School or Program Within-A-School
Whole School is defined as every student in the school, 100% of the student population is in the magnet program.

Program Within-A-School programs must consist of at least twenty percent (20%) of the student population involved in the program OR a minimum of 150 students.

Magnet School of Merit or New & Emerging School of Merit
New & Emerging Magnet School category is designed for magnet schools or programs within-a-school in their third or fourth year of implementation.

- *To aid in the navigation of the narrative, CLARIFYING QUESTIONS are included. During the submission process, you are not required to answer these questions.*

CRITERIA & REQUIREMENTS

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

NOMINEE (SCHOOL/PROGRAM) INFORMATION

You will populate this information during the online submission process.

- **School/Program** - *text field*
- **Logo** - *upload field (300 dpi .png)*
- **School URL/Website** - *text field*
- **Social Media Accounts/Handles** - *text field*
- **Type of Magnet** - *checkbox/dropdown; select one*
  - ○ Whole School Magnet (WS)
  - ○ Program Within-A-School (PWAS)
- **Grade Level(s)** - *checkbox, select all that apply*
- **Elementary, Intermediate, High** - *checkbox, select all that apply*
- **Magnet Theme(s)** - *text field*
- **# of Years as a Magnet** - *text field*
- **School Address** - *text field*
- **School Telephone** - *text field*
- **School District** - *text field*
- **System: Rural | Suburban | Urban** - *checkbox/dropdown; select one*

- **District Enrollment #'s** - *text field*
- **Whole School Enrollment #'s** - *text field*
- **Program Within-A-School Enrollment #'s** (required for PWAS applicants) - *text field*
- **Are students selected by a lottery process: YES/NO?** - *checkbox/dropdown*
  If no, describe the selection process and any variables that impact magnet school enrollment/acceptance.
- **Does the school use academic criteria** *(i.e., test scores, GPA, etc)* **for admission?** YES/NO - *checkbox/dropdown*
- **Are you a** *(not a criterion)*
  - ○ National Certified Demonstration Magnet School?
    - ■ *select the year you received the designation*
  - ○ Nationally Certified Magnet School?
    - ■ *select the year you received the designation*
  - ○ No
- **Principal and Principal's Email** - *text field*
- **Magnet Coordinator/Lead Teacher and Magnet Coordinator/Lead Teacher's Email** - *text field*

ABSTRACT

A 125 word description of your magnet program. Please make sure all information provided in the abstract is discussed/explained in the application. This abstract will be posted on the MSA website for winning entries and may be used for other publications. *No more than 125 words.*
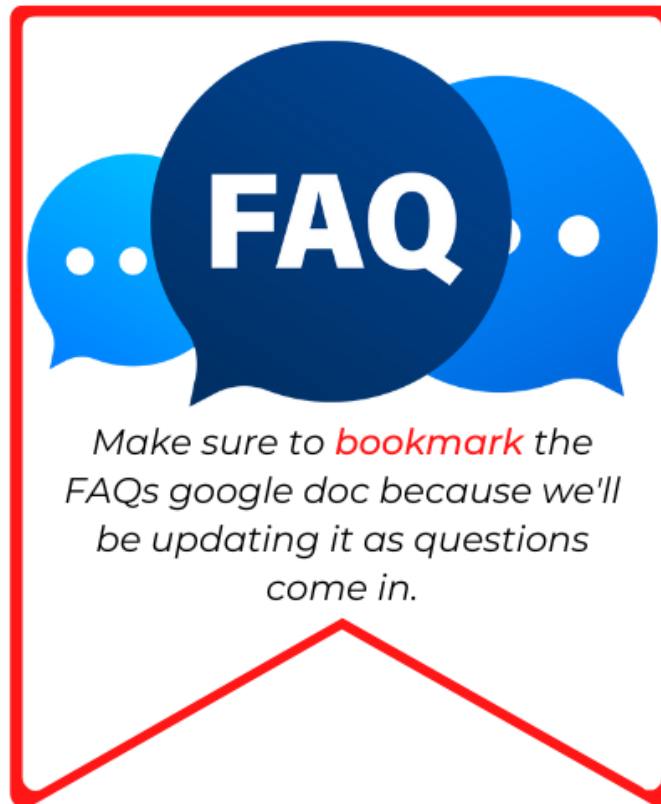
SIGNATURES PAGE

Download PDF of blank signatures page **HERE.** Two signatures needed:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bOlXqcVVjChMgGLjZ0_Iv-SPljP_PrjhlZE8XpSpG4l/edit?usp=sharing

- Nominee/Principal Assurance
- Superintendent/Designee

Upload as PDF during the online submission process.

📄 **2023-2024 Merit Awards Program - FAQs_WEB**

Make sure to **bookmark** the FAQs google doc because we'll be updating it as questions come in.

CRITERIA 1: **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

1. **A summary of how the vision statement for the school is related to the theme and aligns with the goals, objectives, and educational activities for the school.** *No more than 300 words (5 pts).*

0 points	1 point	3 points	5 points
Vision statement is present and reflects <u>minimal</u> alignment of goals, objectives, and educational activities in support of the magnet theme.	Vision statement is present and clearly defined and reflects <u>limited</u> alignment of goals, objectives, and educational activities in support of the magnet theme.	Vision statement is present and clearly defined and reflects <u>an overall</u> alignment of goals, objectives, and educational activities in support of the magnet theme.	Vision statement is present and clearly defined and clearly articulates alignment of goals, objectives, and educational activities in support of the magnet theme.

2. **Describe units or lessons that demonstrate how the magnet theme is integrated throughout the school in core classes as well as electives and co-curricular activities.** *No more than 500 words (5 pts).*

0 points	1 point	3 points	5 points
The application does not articulate any thematic integration outside of the identified theme-related courses.	The magnet theme is evident in a limited manner and is not consistent throughout the school day.	There is evidence that the magnet theme is integrated into 1 or 2 of the core classes of study.	There is evidence that the magnet theme is integrated throughout the school in 3 core classes, in addition to electives and co-curricular activities.

3. **How do you ensure that all demographic groups, including but not limited to English "Language" Learners and students who receive special education services are able to find out about and apply to your school/program (equitable access)?** *No more than 375 words (5 pts).*

0 points	1 point	3 points	5 points
School does not actively promote equitable access to demographic groups.	The application reflects a limited effort; however, it does not reflect inclusion in their demographic table or narrative.	The application reflects gains made by the schools to achieve equitable inclusion of different demographic groups, English Language Learners, and students who receive special education services.	The application clearly demonstrates that the school has promoted equitable access to all demographic groups, English Language Learners, and students who receive special education services AND has evidence that reflects this.

CRITERIA 2: **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

Reading or Math OR other areas determined by your State Department of Education.

New and Emerging schools must use growth data.

All other schools must use state assessments but also have the option of including growth data used by your district or school.

◊ Data table templates are provided below; each table will be uploaded separately.

Clarifying questions:

- *Are students meeting their growth targets?*
- *Do you see an increase in the number of students meeting the growth target from year to year?*
- *What were some of the strategies used to maintain student achievement?*

If using growth data, the following clarifying questions will provide guidance to the readers as they review the data provided.

Clarifying questions:

- *What types of assessments were used for your school/program? (Could include standardized testing, alternative assessments, end of course tests, etc).*
- *What terminology was used to report performance levels, i.e., highly proficient, proficient, partially proficient, below proficient?*
- *Which core subject(s) did your school (or program) maintain or increase academic achievement?*
- *In which core subject(s) did your school experience a decline in scores?*

20 points

1. **School, district, and state achievement data for enrolled students is disaggregated by race for the following academic years, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, if applicable, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 (SY16-17 thru SY22-23). Schools must indicate new assessments and provide documentation from the state when data is unavailable. If your state no longer allows the publishing of test information disaggregated in conjunction with FRL, an aggregated template is provided.**

   For New & Emerging schools, report growth data for the years covered in the application.

   Must use provided data table templates (5 pts).

   New & Emerging Schools are required to use growth scores/benchmark data (report data for the years covered in the application; in their 3rd (SY21-22 thru SY22-23) or 4th year of implementation (SY20-21 thru SY22-23).

   Programs Within-A-School and Whole School magnets have the option to include growth scores/benchmark data for SY16-17 thru SY22-23 in addition to the SY16-17 thru SY22-23 standardized data; except for SY19-20. The goal is to show growth over time.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA TABLE TEMPLATES available via google sheet *(unprotected).*
*Make a copy or download, and **upload each table as an excel file**.*

Disaggregated Student Achievement Data Table	Aggregated Student Achievement Data Table
● SA_SY16-17 thru SY22-23 _DISAGGREGATED (SY19-20 grayed out) - Click **HERE**	● SA_SY16-17 thru SY22-23_AGGREGATED (SY19-20 grayed out) - Click **HERE**
● GROWTH DATA_SY16-17 thru SY22-23_DISAGGREGATED - Click **HERE**	● GROWTH DATA_SY15-16 thru SY21-22_AGGREGATED - Click **HERE**
● NEW & EMERGING_GROWTH DATA_SY20-21 thru SY22-23_DISAGGREGATED - Click **HERE**	● NEW & EMERGING_GROWTH DATA_SY15-16 thru SY21-22_AGGREGATED - Click **HERE**

0 points	1 point	3 points	5 points
No data or documentation provided.	Minimal data and no documentation provided.	Partial data and no documentation provided.	All data or documentation is provided.

2. **Explanation of the student achievement/growth data; explain in which years you narrowed the achievement gap among your students, include attendance rates and graduation rates for high school (if applicable) for 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2020-21 if applicable, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 (SY16-17 thru SY22-23).** *No more than 1000 words (15 pts).*

For <u>New & Emerging</u> schools, explanation of the growth data for the years covered in the application.

REMINDER: You can discuss achievement in comparison to your school district and state; however, the focus should be on narrowing achievement disparities within your school/program.

0 points	5 points	10 points	15 points
No explanation of student data.	The explanation discusses only one year (out of three) of improvement narrowing achievement disparities among its student body or shows growth data.	The explanation discusses how the school has narrowed disparities among its student body in achievement for two out of three years.	The explanation discusses how the school has narrowed disparities in achievement for all four years (three-year trend) among its student body.

CRITERIA 3: **INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

30 points

1. **A description of how school-wide innovative instructional practices are implemented in core classes and electives.** *No more than 500 words (10 pts).*

0 points	1 point	5 points	7 points	10 points
The application does not address innovative instructional practices and/or approaches or philosophy utilized.	The application mentions innovative instructional practices and/or approaches or philosophy; however, it is not described.	The application describes several innovative instructional practices and/or approaches or philosophy; however, it is limited to 1 or 2 core classes/subject areas.	The application describes several innovative instructional practices and/or approaches or philosophy; however, it is in most core classes/subject areas.	The application describes several innovative instructional practices, approaches, or philosophy; and is demonstrated in ALL areas (including most core content classes and electives) throughout the magnet program/school.

2. **How professional development activities enhance instructional delivery and are aligned with the magnet theme. For example,** *what are you doing to support your magnet theme, teachers, and all other instructional staff to understand the magnet-theme philosophy/goals and objectives.* *No more than 450 words (10 pts).*

0 points	1 point	5 points	7 points	10 points
The application does not reference theme specific professional development for staff.	The application references professional development; however, it is not theme specific (i.e., reading professional development does not support the theme of the school).	The school offers limited professional development to staff around the theme; however, attendance is optional. PD may also reside solely in professional learning communities.	The school offers professional development to staff specific to the theme; however, attendance is optional. PD may also reside solely in professional learning communities.	The school offers extensive professional development specific to the theme, all licensed staff have received training AND it is embedded into professional learning communities.

3. **How diversity (ethnic or socio-economic) is infused into the magnet school/program curriculum - not just festivals and/or holidays.** *No more than 400 words (10 pts).*

0 points	1 point	5 points	7 points	10 points
The application does not illustrate or address diversity.	The application references an appreciation for diversity; however, it does not describe how it is infused into the program/curriculum.	The school has a few activities dedicated to diversity; however, it does not demonstrate it as part of the curriculum or climate of the school.	The school has frequent activities dedicated to diversity; however, it does not demonstrate it as part of the curriculum or climate of the school.	The school is a model for diversity inclusion and has made it an integral part of the school curriculum and culture.

CRITERIA 4: **DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

Demographic Data:

- Current <u>programs within-a-school</u> enrollment by racial/ethnic categories, and totals (# & %). YES/NO
- Current school enrollment by racial/ethnic categories, and totals (# & %). YES/NO
- Local district/attendance zone enrollment by racial/ethnic categories, and totals (# & %), *optional.* YES/NO
- District enrollment by racial/ethnic categories, and totals (# & %). YES/NO
- Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) eligibility for students in the district/school/program (# & %), *optional.* YES/NO

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA TABLE TEMPLATES available via google sheet *(unprotected).*
*Make a copy or download, and **upload as an excel file**.*

Program Within-A-School Demographic Data Table Click **HERE**	Whole School Demographic Data Table Click **HERE**

NOTE: Program Within-A-School programs must consist of at least twenty percent (20%) of the student population involved in the program OR a minimum of 150 students.

- *Does your district have a diversity plan? YES/NO*
- *Does your school have a marketing plan based on the district's diversity plan? YES/NO*
  If not, how do you market and recruit for your school? How does this plan support the diversity goal of your school?
- *Are you required to follow the district's diversity plan? YES/NO If so, how does your marketing and recruitment plan align with the district's plan? If not, what is the diversity plan for your school?*
- *Does your school's enrollment represent different ethnicities and/or gender? YES/NO*

WS = 20 points | PWAS = 25 points

1. **A description of the student diversity plan (if there is a diversity goal) or a description of how student diversity is leveraged and maximized.** *No more than 500 words (10 pts).*

0 points	1 point	5 points	7 points	10 points
The application does not describe a student diversity plan or have a description.	The application does not include a school diversity plan; however, a district diversity plan is referenced. No description of how student diversity is leveraged and maximized.	The application includes a diversity plan or description that recognizes and values student diversity; however, there is limited evidence that the plan is implemented, however no specific school-wide or classroom strategies are explained that promote collaboration or exchange of ideas between students of different ethnicities and/or gender. PWAS: different ethnicities and genders AND between magnet and non-magnet students.	The application includes a diversity plan or description that recognizes and values student diversity with extensive evidence that the plan is implemented, however no specific school-wide or classroom strategies are explained that promote collaboration or exchange of ideas between students of different ethnicities and/or gender. PWAS: different ethnicities and genders AND between magnet and non-magnet students.	The application includes a student diversity plan or description that addresses specific school-wide and classroom strategies that promote the exchange of ideas and collaboration between students of different ethnicities and/or gender. PWAS: different ethnicities and/or gender AND between magnet and non-magnet students.

2. **Explain how student enrollment reflects the diversity plan, diversity statement, strategic plan, or district initiatives or mandates.** *State the diversity goal for your district/attendance zone or school. Explain how student enrollment is reflective of the stated goal, plan, etc.* No more than 400 words (10 pts).

0 points	1 point	5 points	6 points	7 points	10 points
The application does not address or explain how student enrollment reflects the diversity goal.	The school enrollment data does not reflect the diversity goal, nor explains why.	The school enrollment data does not reflect the diversity goal, and an explanation is provided.	The school enrollment data does not reflect the diversity goal, and an explanation is provided, however the enrollment is reflective of different ethnicities and genders.	The school enrollment data represents different ethnicities and genders, reflects the diversity of the district/attendance zone, but no additional information is provided.	The school enrollment data reflects different ethnicities and genders, and the application addresses how the school actively works to sustain a diverse student enrollment OR meets the stated diversity goal.

3. **Are students selected by a process that does not include academic (i.e., test scores, grades, etc.) criteria?** *Information will be auto-populated from the SCHOOL/PROGRAM INFO section.*

NOTE: Program Within-A-School programs must consist of at least twenty percent (20%) of the student population involved in the program OR a minimum of 150 students.

4. **For <u>programs within-a-school applicants</u>, a description on how the program is designed to facilitate interactions among magnet and non-magnet students based on academic opportunities/learning activities (beyond flags, foods, and festivals).** *No more than 500 words (5 pts).*

0 points	1 point	1 point	3 points	5 points
The application does not describe academic opportunities to interact between students in the program and school.	The application mentions academic opportunities to interact between students; however, it is not described.	Limited academic opportunities to interact between students in the program and school is described.	Academic opportunities to interact between students are described; however, they are limited.	Students interact in a variety of ways with a focus on academics/academic learning and clubs.

CRITERIA 5: **PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

10 points

1. **How partnerships formed with parents, community groups, industry partners and other organizations connect to and support student learning <u>and</u> are aligned to the magnet theme (beyond fundraising).** *No more than 350 words (8 pts).*

0 points	1 point	5 points	8 points
The application does not address partnerships that are aligned to the magnet theme and support learning.	The application only addresses parent/family partnerships OR the parent/family "partnerships" are limited to curriculum or theme related showcase nights..	The application references partnerships with parents, community groups, and other organizations that connect to and support learning but are not aligned to the magnet theme.	The application references partnerships formed with parents, community groups, industry partners and other organizations that connect to and support learning, AND are aligned to the magnet theme.

2. **Current (2022 or 2023) letters of support for the Magnet Schools of America Merit Award from:**
   - ❖ **An active parent or parent group** *(1 pt);* and **YES** = **1 pt. /NO**.
   - ❖ **An active industry partner/partnering organization** *(1 pt).* **YES** = **1 pt. /NO**.
     Checklist: Letter is dated ◊ Letter must be in PDF ◊ Make sure correct letter is uploaded

CRITERIA 6: **AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

5 points

1. **Significant achievements and school awards (including students and staff) received during the last three (3) years, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 (SY20-21 thru SY22-23) as covered by the application (receiving a grant is not considered a significant achievement for this specific category).** *No more than 200 words (5 pts).*

0 points	1 point	3 points	5 points
No awards or recognition have been given to the school.	An MSA Merit award has been given to the school.	Awards have been earned by individuals in the school.	Awards have been earned by staff, students, and school-wide recognition has been received.

TO BEGIN YOUR SY23-24 MERIT APPLICATION - **[CLICK HERE](#)**

or copy and paste the link below

AND enter your MSA login credentials.

https://magnet.secure-platform.com/a/page/merit2023

Inquiries, email support@magnet.edu