

The background features a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of white dots. On the left side, there are several overlapping circular elements. A prominent one is a large circle with a scale around its perimeter, marked with numbers from 140 to 260 in increments of 10. Other circles include dashed lines, solid lines, and arrows, suggesting a technical or scientific theme.

WHAT IS A SPECIALTY CENTER?

AND HOW CAN I JOIN ONE?

AN INTRODUCTION FOR HCPS MIDDLE
SCHOOLERS

HISTORY

- In 1995, Henrico County Public Schools started a new chapter by adding two specialty centers, the Center for the Arts and the International Baccalaureate, both at Henrico High School.
- More additions followed, and now HCPS boasts seventeen specialty centers and two Advanced Career Education Centers.

TODAY

- Each HCPS high school is home to at least one specialty center, offering Henrico County students choices to focus their learning experiences. The centers offer advanced courses to students who have clear interests and specific educational and career goals. Attending a specialty center is an opportunity to concentrate on a specialized interest while completing a rigorous college-preparatory program.
- Rising ninth-graders may apply to the specialty center of their choice. Each specialty center has specific requirements and testing as part of the admissions process. Informational sessions and open houses are held each fall to help students and parents make decisions for the following school year.

OUR CENTERS

- Advanced Career Education Center at Hermitage
- Advance Career Education Center at Highland Springs
- Advance College Academy Business Administration
- Advance College Academy Social Sciences
- Center for Allied Health and Human Services
- Center for the Arts
- Center for Communications & Media Relations
- Center for Education and Human Development
- Center for Engineering
- Center for Environmental Science and Sustainability
- Center for the Humanities
- Center for Information Technology
- International Baccalaureate MYP and CP/ DP
- Center for Leadership, Government and Global Economics
- Todd Allen Phillips Center for Medical Sciences
- Center for Spanish Language and Global Citizenship

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE A CENTER?

- Think about your interests
- Think about your future plans
- Think about your needs



WHY WOULD I WANT TO GO TO A CENTER?

- Smaller school within a school
- Enrollment in classes with students with similar interests
- Opportunity to explore subjects deeply
- Development of meaningful relationships with teachers
- Rigorous academic work in preparation for the future

THE CENTERS ARE DIFFERENT

- Advanced Career Education Centers offer hands-on career training and certification.
- IB students take a whole schedule of IB classes, even PE.
- The Advanced College Academies are partnered with J. Sargent Reynolds Community College, and their students graduate with an Associates degree as well as a Virginia diploma.
- Other centers provide intense coursework in their particular specialized field combined with comprehensive coursework in the other subjects.
- Many require advanced coursework prior to high school, such as Algebra 1, a year of a language, Earth Science and/or World History and Geography 1.
- Some centers like CFA and Language immersion have a qualifying audition or test.
- Other centers require a math, reading or writing test.



BUT THEY ARE SIMILAR TOO

- All require an application.
- All offer rigor and challenge to prepare you for college and beyond.
- All provide the possibility of college credit either through dual enrollment with a community college or examinations like AP and IB.
- All are accessible with HCPS transportation.
- At all centers, you become a part of THAT school to play sports, etc.

LET'S GET STARTED!



FIRST, GATHER INFORMATION!

- Virtual Information Sessions: October 4, 14, and 20. Get link from HCPS site.
- Open houses
- County and school websites
- Specialty center brochure
- Henrico County Planning Guide

LOOK FOR THE RIGHT FIT



HOW DO I GET READY TO APPLY?

- **Think about your coursework.** Many centers require you to have taken advanced math courses like Algebra 1 and even Geometry. Others may require that you have had at least a year of Spanish or French. Still others require Earth Science or World History and Geography 1.
- **Do your best in school.** Center leaders evaluate each application based on admission test scores, an impromptu essay, and your grades.
- **Have good relationships with your teachers.** The application requires two teacher recommendations.
- **Get involved.** Center leaders may also evaluate applicants based on the extra-curricular activities
- **Stay informed.** There are timelines and deadlines. There will be evening information sessions and open houses to attend. Applications are opened in November and due in January.
- **Talk to your counselor!**

HOW DO I APPLY?

- Online application available on HCPS Specialty Center site on **NOVEMBER 15, 2021**.
- Auditions for CFA and Language ability tests for Language Immersion are TBA. Dates will be on the website and the application
- Fill out the application:
 - Student information sheet
 - Individual specialty center essays, portfolios, and auditions
 - Teacher recommendations
 - Transcript
 - Test information (math, reading, and/or writing tests)
- Applications due to your counselor, usually before Winter Break, but absolutely by **January 10, 2022**

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

- **March 11, 2022, 4:30 PM:** *Online access opened to check application status/submit acceptance*
- **March 25, 2022, 11:39 PM:** *Notification of intent deadline*
- **April 1, 2022, 4:30 PM:** *Off Waitlist acceptance of offer deadline*

SELECTION

- On **March 11**, you will receive information that you were SELECTED, WAITLISTED, or NOT SELECTED
- You have until **MARCH 25** to accept an invitation to join a center or remain on a waitlist
- You may accept ONE Center and remain on ONE Waitlist. OR , if not selected to a center, you may stay on TWO Waitlists.
- Waitlisted students who are then invited to join have until **April 1** to accept that center

ADVICE FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ **Read and follow all directions on the application.**
- ✓ **Type or print clearly.**
- ✓ **Put forth your best effort on the application and during the assessment sessions.**
- ✓ **Follow deadlines established by your school counselor.**
- ✓ **Proofread your application.**

YOUR QUESTIONS

