



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Science, Mathematics, Computer Science Magnet Program

MONTGOMERY BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL
51 University Boulevard East • Silver Spring, Maryland 20901
Darryl Williams, *Principal* 301-649-2800



2009-2010 School Year

To College Admissions Officers:

The student whose application is enclosed is participating in the **Science, Mathematics, Computer Science Magnet Program** for highly able students at **Montgomery Blair High School**. Each year after testing and careful screening of over 400 students from sixteen of the twenty five high schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, just 100 students are accepted for admission into the ninth grade. Our sister program at Poolesville High School accepts 50 students from the remaining nine high schools in the county.

The vision of the committee of scientists, university professors, community members and educators who designed the Blair Magnet Program was to provide an educational environment for students who could go beyond a traditional curriculum. The courses are interdisciplinary in design with more breadth and depth than typically found in high school. Mathematics and computers are interwoven into each science and problem-solving course. Fundamental courses are completed in the first two years including all four basic sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Earth Science, Biology), two years of computer science (AP Computer Science A level), and mathematics leading to Analysis (AP Calculus BC) as well as research techniques. Although we realize that not all of our students will become scientists or mathematicians, we believe that all students, no matter what their eventual goals, need a strong background in these areas.

In the final two years, students can choose from a wide range of offerings including Advanced Placement courses and over 20 additional classes not traditionally found in high schools. These range from Computer Graphics and Software Design to Genetics and Thermodynamics. The program also has the flexibility to revise curricula with respect to student and community needs, technological advances and current research. For example, students enrolled in Engineering Problem Solving (2975) are investigating robotic systems, those in Guided Research (297711) are studying 3-D Computer Graphics, and those in Guided Research (2980) are analyzing statistics in sports. Please see the Blair Magnet Profile for a complete listing of courses.

In addition to an interdisciplinary approach to learning, the program is designed so that students participate in constructing their own knowledge base, develop a repertoire of problem solving skills and have the opportunity to pursue both independent and collaborative research projects. Research options include working with an experienced professional research mentor at a local government research institution, university, or private industry or working on-campus with a team for a common goal.

The success of this program for these students is apparent in the accomplishments of each graduating class. Although competition and preparation for tests are not part of the curriculum, the enclosed materials will show that this class has excelled by all testing measures. In addition, the students have distinguished themselves in many state, national, and international

competitions, such as the Intel Science Talent Search, the National Merit Scholarship competition, the International Science and Engineering Fair, and the International Computer Science, Mathematical, Physics and Chemistry Olympiads.

Like 80 other high schools of this type across the country, the students in this program are actively involved in the National Consortium for Specialized Secondary Schools of Mathematics, Science, and Technology (NCSSSMST). They participate in annual conventions and in ongoing student-directed research and investigations. The Blair Magnet Program is a founding member of the NCSSSMST, which is dedicated to providing innovative and rigorous college level curricula for high achieving students.

The mission of the Blair Magnet Program is to provide an environment in which each person's education is maximized. When reviewing this student's individual record, please consider the nature of the program and the demands it has placed on the candidate. The magnet is designed to challenge and stretch the minds of some of the brightest and best students in the country. Grade point average should be considered in light of the student's willingness to accept this challenge and to take a risk in leaving a traditional high school setting to enter such a program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Ostrander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "O".

Peter Ostrander
Blair Magnet Program Coordinator

PO:mrB

Enclosures