



NPS Middle School Specialty Programs Information and Application Instructions

The application deadline for the middle school specialty programs has been extended until 2/24/23 to allow those interested to apply to our newest specialty program, The Compass Academy at Ruffner.

Even those who have already submitted applications may submit new applications to include our newest specialty program in their choices.

PLEASE NOTE: The application that is submitted LAST (with the most recent timestamp from submission) will be the only application considered for the 2023-2024 specialty programming year. For example, if the first application was submitted on 1/19/23 and then another was submitted on 2/7/23, then the 2/7/23 application will be considered and the previous application will not be considered.

New Specialty Program: Compass Academy at Ruffner

NPS is launching a **new specialty program offering** for the 2023-2024 school year, the **Compass Academy at Ruffner**, for Grades 3-8. This specialty program will provide comprehensive, school-wide academic and enrichment programming around career exploration in four pathways:

- **Engineering and sciences**
- **Fine and performing arts**
- **Technology**
- **Leadership and service**

For elementary students in grades 3-5, students will explore potential careers in all four pathways. Students in the middle school grades (6-8) will choose their desired exploration pathway from the choices above, and students will participate in electives and enrichment activities aligned with their chosen pathway. When applying for the program, middle school students (grades 6-8) will select their preference for pathway.

For the upcoming 2023-2024 year, students currently in grades 2-7 may apply to attend the Compass Academy specialty program for enrollment in the 2023-2024 school year. Students applying to attend in the 3rd-5th grades DO NOT complete the essay portion of the application. Transportation will be provided. Beginning with the application cycle for 2024-2025, applications will be accepted for students entering the 3rd grade and 6th grade.

All students enrolled in the elementary specialty program will automatically be enrolled in the middle school specialty program when they progress to the 6th grade as long as they continue to meet program requirements. (They will not need to apply for the middle school program during their 5th grade year.)

General Application Instructions

Please note that applicants will indicate their program choice(s) when completing the online application. **Students may apply for up to three middle school programs.** However, as part of the application, students will **rank** their program choices in the online application in the order of preference. Please be sure to consider these rankings before accessing the application. Requirements for each program are included below.

Please review all information and instructions here, in addition to exploring information about the specialty programs [on our website](#), reviewing our program brochure that briefly explains each program, and attending one or more program-specific information sessions/open houses prior to completing the online application.

Online applications that contain all required components must be submitted by 11:59 pm on February 24, 2023.

For this year only, those who have already submitted application but who wish to apply to our newest specialty program, Compass Academy at Ruffner, may reapply.



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The application with the most recent timestamp of submission will be the only application considered for the 2023-2024 specialty programming year.

To be considered “complete,” applicants must ensure that they have submitted the following:

- **A completed online application – ALL APPLICANTS** (Applicants will receive a confirmation sent to the email provided.)
- **A written essay in response to the prompt emailed to npspecprog@nps.k12.va.us – Rising middle school students ONLY** (the prompt and rubric are included below).

All non-NPS applicants will also complete the above process. The NPS Secondary Programs office will be in contact with non-NPS applicants regarding needed academic records to accompany applications after the completed application is received.

Questions? Please call the Secondary Programs office at (757) 628-3989.

Program General Requirements

General Requirements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising 6th grader and City of Norfolk resident for the following programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academy for Discovery ○ Academy of International Studies ○ Compass Academy ○ Pre-Medical, Health, & Engineering Program ○ Southside STEM Academy ○ Young Scholars Program • Rising 3rd grader and City of Norfolk resident for the following programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academy for Discovery (click here for elementary application information for this program ONLY) ○ Compass Academy (click here for the application) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attendance and discipline history* • Successful completion of all elementary core subjects with a grade of B or better. • Passing score for all 4th Grade SOL Tests*** • Must maintain enrollment requirements per program enrollment agreement contract • Completed online application AND a typed, emailed essay. Only online applications will be accepted. <p>***Alternate assessments may be considered for students not enrolled in a Virginia public school.</p> <p>*Extenuating circumstances may be considered with explanation. The application includes space for this information, as needed.</p>
Additional Requirements for Young Scholars Program Applicants	
<p>The Young Scholars Program requires that applicants be identified as gifted in General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA) or Specific Academic Aptitude (SAA) for Math, Communication Skills, or both.</p> <p>If you have questions about eligibility for the Young Scholars program, please contact Ms. Karla Stead in the Office of Academic Rigor at (757) 852-4674.</p>	

Important Dates & Deadlines for Middle School Specialty Programs

11/3/23 – Online applications become available for submission – visit the [NPS Specialty Programs page](#) for the link
 2/24/23 at 11:59 pm – Deadline to submit completed online application and to email typed essay

4/17/23 – Notifications of acceptance, waitlist, or denial mailed to all applicants

5/5/23 – Deadline for students and families to notify programs of their intent to attend the program to which they were accepted for the 2023-2024 school year.



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Writing Prompt and Instructions

When completing the online application, students will certify that the essay that they will submit electronically is their original work.

Students will submit their ***typed*** response to the writing prompt as either a MS Word or PDF document to npsspecprog@nps.k12.va.us by 11:59 pm on February 24, 2023, in order for their application to their chosen programs to be considered complete.

Online applications that do not have corresponding submitted essays will not be considered.

At the top of the essay, students must include the following heading. This heading will be redacted prior to scoring. However, the heading is needed to match the essay with the completed online application.

Student's Full Name:

Student's Current School:

Student's essays should be ***at least three well-developed paragraphs*** (introduction, body, and conclusion).

Please respond to the following prompt to develop the essay:

Why are you applying to attend a middle school specialty program? Include in your response the following:

- How a middle school specialty program will help you prepare for your future academic and career goals
- What specific skills and talents you would contribute to a middle school specialty program
- Any other details unique to you and your situation that you would like to express regarding your reason for applying

Your essay may be in general about all the programs or written about the program you have ranked as your first (or only) choice. Make sure to support your answers with specific evidence and/or examples.

Please see the next page for the essay scoring rubric. Prior to scoring, the Secondary Programs office will redact the headings on all essays and assign each typed essay a number prior to providing the redacted essays to the scoring team. A team of NPS English-certified teachers will then assess and score the essays. The team will use ***only*** the rubric criteria in scoring the essays.

Please see the next page for the scoring rubric. Please use the scoring rubric as a guide when writing the essay and use the rubric as criteria to revise and edit the essay prior to emailing it for final submission.



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Essay Rubric

Traits	4	3	2	1
Focus & Details	There is one clear, well- focused topic. Main ideas are clear and are well supported by detailed and accurate information.	There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main ideas are clear but are not well supported by detailed information.	There is one topic. Main ideas are somewhat clear.	The topic and main ideas are not clear.
Organization	The introduction is inviting, states the main topic, and provides an overview of the paper. Information is relevant and presented in a logical order. The conclusion is strong.	The introduction states the main topic and provides an overview of the paper. A conclusion is included.	The introduction states the main topic. A conclusion is included.	There is no clear introduction, structure, or conclusion.
Voice	The author’s purpose of writing is very clear, and there is strong evidence of attention to audience. The author’s extensive knowledge and/or experience with the topic is/are evident.	The author’s purpose of writing is somewhat clear, and there is some evidence of attention to audience. The author’s knowledge and/or experience with the topic is/are evident.	The author’s purpose of writing is somewhat clear, and there is evidence of attention to audience. The author’s knowledge and/or experience with the topic is/are limited.	The author’s purpose of writing is unclear.
Word Choice	The author uses vivid words and phrases. The choice and placement of words seems accurate, natural, and not forced.	The author uses vivid words and phrases. The choice and placement of words is inaccurate at times and/or seems overdone.	The author uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety.	The writer uses a limited vocabulary. Jargon or clichés may be present and detract from the meaning.
Sentence Structure, Grammar, Mechanics, & Spelling	All sentences are well constructed and have varied structure and length. The author makes no errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling.	Most sentences are well constructed and have varied structure and length. The author makes a few errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling, but they do not interfere with understanding.	Most sentences are well constructed, but they have a similar structure and/or length. The author makes several errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling that interfere with understanding.	Sentences sound awkward, are distractingly repetitive, or are difficult to understand. The author makes numerous errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling that interfere with understanding.
Reviewer’s Comments				