

APPLICATION REFERENCE GUIDE

For Applicants & Parents/Legal Guardians

OFFICIAL ADMISSIONS INFORMATION & UPDATES

www.hcstonline.org/admissions • admissions@hcstonline.org

READ THIS BEFORE YOU START THE APPLICATION

The application must be completed in **ONE SESSION**. You cannot save your progress and return later.
Use this guide to gather everything you need before starting.

1 BEFORE YOU START

Have the following information ready:

- ☐ Parent/legal guardian information
- ☐ Student information
- ☐ School counselor's name and email address
- ☐ Teacher/recommender's name and email address
- ☐ First-choice Career & Technical Education (CTE) major
- ☐ Optional second-choice CTE major, if desired
- ☐ Completed 400–600 word admissions essay

ONLY ONE APPLICATION MAY BE SUBMITTED PER STUDENT. If twins or multiple children are applying, submit a separate application for each child.

2 IMPORTANT DATES

ADMISSIONS STEP	DATE / DEADLINE
STEP 1 Application Opens	Monday, October 5, 2026 at 4:00 PM
STEP 1 Application Due	Friday, November 13, 2026 at 4:00 PM
STEP 4 Portfolio Emailed	Monday, November 16, 2026
STEP 2 Teacher Recommendation Due	Monday, November 30, 2026 at 12:00 PM
STEP 3 School Counselor Submission Due	Wednesday, December 23, 2026 at 3:00 PM
STEP 4 Student Portfolio Due	Wednesday, December 23, 2026 at 3:00 PM

3 WHAT IS ON THE APPLICATION?

SECTION 1 - Parent/Legal Guardian Information

One parent/legal guardian email address must be verified. A verification code will be sent to that email. The verified email will be used for official admissions communications.

TWO-PARENT / TWO-HOUSEHOLD FAMILIES

Only **one parent/legal guardian email address** will be used for official HCST admissions communications.

For families in which parents/legal guardians live in separate households, we strongly recommend creating a **shared email account that both parents/legal guardians can access** and using that email address on the application. **Please make sure the email address entered on the application is checked regularly throughout the entire admissions process.**

SECTION 2 - Student Information

Enter the student's information carefully and exactly as requested.

SECTION 3 - Student Demographics

Provide the requested demographic information for the student.

SECTION 4 - Current School Information

Provide the student's current school information and school counselor contact information.

SECTION 5 - Teacher Recommendation

Provide one current classroom teacher who teaches a core academic subject: Math, Language Arts, Science, or Social Studies.

SECTION 6 - CTE Major Selection

Select one required first-choice major. You may also select one optional second-choice major. First-choice receives primary consideration.

SECTION 7 - Admissions Essay

1st Choice Program of Study

- Why have you selected this major as your Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program of Study to pursue as a high school student? (Minimum 400 words, Maximum 600 words)
 - What details of this major most interest you?
 - What experiences, if any, have you had that have prepared you for this major? (Experience not necessary)
 - What characteristics or qualities do you embody that have prepared you for this major?
 - How will this major help you achieve your overall goals in your future endeavors?

2nd Choice Program of Study (OPTIONAL)

- Why have you selected this major as your second choice? (Maximum 250 Words)

SECTION 8 - Deadlines, Acknowledgement & Electronic Signature

Review the application, admissions requirements, deadlines, acknowledgements, and required electronic signature before submitting.

WRITE THESE DOWN BEFORE YOU BEGIN

School Counselor Name: _____

School Counselor Email: _____

Teacher/Recommender Name: _____

Teacher Email: _____

First-Choice Major: _____

Optional Second-Choice Major: _____

4 TEACHER RECOMMENDATION

- Enter the teacher's CORRECT email address on the application.
- After the application is submitted, the teacher automatically receives an email with the official online recommendation form.
- Hard-copy recommendations and recommendation letters sent by email are not accepted.
- If the teacher cannot find the email, ask them to check spam/junk and verify the email address entered on the application.

5 ADMISSIONS ESSAY

MINIMUM 400 WORDS • MAXIMUM 600 WORDS

Essay prompt: Why have you selected this major as your Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program of Study to pursue as a high school student?

- What details of this major most interest you?
- What experiences, if any, have you had that have prepared you for this major? (Experience not necessary)
- What characteristics or qualities do you embody that have prepared you for this major?
- How will this major help you achieve your overall goals in your future endeavors?

BEST PRACTICE: Write, proofread, and finalize your essay in Microsoft Word or Google Docs BEFORE opening the application.

6 AFTER YOU SUBMIT: ALL 4 STEPS ARE REQUIRED

STEP	REQUIRED ITEM	WHO COMPLETES IT	DEADLINE
STEP 1	APPLICATION	Parent/Student	Due Friday, November 13 at 4:00 PM
STEP 2	TEACHER RECOMMENDATION	Teacher/Recommender	Due Monday, November 30 at 12:00 PM
STEP 3	SCHOOL COUNSELOR SUBMISSION	School Counselor	Due Wednesday, December 23 at 3:00 PM
STEP 4	STUDENT PORTFOLIO	Student	Emailed Nov. 16 • Due Dec. 23 at 3:00 PM

Submitting the application completes STEP 1 only. Your admissions file is not complete until all required steps are completed by the published deadlines.

7 STUDENT PORTFOLIO

- A personalized Google Slides portfolio link will be emailed to the verified parent/legal guardian email on Monday, November 16, 2026.
- The portfolio is required and must be completed by the student.
- Maximum: 10 slides.
- All content must be embedded directly in the assigned Google Slides presentation.
- Do not include extra recommendation letters, grades/transcripts/test scores/attendance records, external website links, or materials requiring additional access.
- At 3:00 PM on December 23, the portfolio changes from Editor to Viewer and can no longer be changed.

8 FINAL CHECKLIST BEFORE SUBMITTING

- ☐ Student information is correct.
- ☐ Parent/legal guardian information is correct.
- ☐ I verified an active parent/legal guardian email address that I check regularly.
- ☐ School counselor's name and email are correct.
- ☐ Teacher/recommender name and email are correct.
- ☐ My first-choice major is correct.
- ☐ My optional second-choice selection, if any, is correct.
- ☐ My admissions essay is complete and between 400–600 words.
- ☐ I understand that only one application may be submitted per student.
- ☐ I reviewed the entire application before submitting.

9 QUICK ANSWERS

Can I save the application and finish later? No. It must be completed in one sitting.

Can I submit more than one application? No. Only one application may be submitted per student.

Do I send report cards, transcripts, attendance, or test scores? No. Your school counselor submits the required school information directly to HCST.

Can I apply separately to High Tech and County Prep? No. There is one application process for all HCST full-time high school programs.

Is the second-choice major required? No. It is optional. Your first-choice major receives primary consideration.

Is PSAT 8/9 required? No.

Where will my portfolio be sent? To the verified parent/legal guardian email address provided on the application.

Applicants and families should monitor the verified parent/legal guardian email and check spam/junk folders regularly.