

Instruction--Elementary and Secondary

MAGNET PROGRAMS/SCHOOLS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has developed the magnet program/school concept into an effective tool to broaden public school choice, stem declining enrollment, mitigate overcrowding, help comply with federal and state-mandated public school choice provisions, accommodate parent/student interest, improve the quality of education, and promote diverse student enrollments. Magnet programs/schools are unique educational programs operating within the district, for which additional resources and/or ancillary services may be provided in order to help make such educational experiences available to students beyond a single attendance boundary area. Part and parcel to the purpose of magnet programs/schools is the broad replication and expansion of high quality programs, particularly those which are academically successful.

Magnet programs/schools provide opportunities that encourage academic excellence in basic areas of study as well as intensive educational experiences in areas in which students demonstrate unusual talent, interest, and/or aspiration. In addition, magnet programs/schools offer students a chance to acquire or develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary to pursue post-secondary aspirations in highly specialized areas of interest. Another goal of magnet programs/schools is to recruit students whose unique language needs or abilities, socio-economic circumstances, race, ethnicity, gender, and exceptional education needs are underrepresented in the magnet program/school.

Magnet programs/schools are classified under a broad definition of school choice whereby an application/random selection or audition process is utilized to select and admit students. Application to magnet programs/schools is voluntary and no other transfer provisions, other than the admission processes delineated in this Rule, may be utilized to access magnet programs/schools. The overarching purpose of magnet programs/schools is to provide an optional educational environment for students that is/are pedagogically and/or geographically distinct from that which is offered in their assigned home school. In addition to unique curricular offerings, magnet programs/schools may be also be conceptually-based, under such models as commuter schools, professional development/laboratory schools, single gender schools, etc. Prior to October 1st of each year, the Superintendent of Schools (or designee) will transmit to the School Board the list of all magnet programs/schools that are operational in the district and for which this Rule applies.

I. Types of Magnet Programs/Schools

- A. **Magnet Program (School-within-a-School):** A magnet program affords a unique instructional program or setting to a specified number of students from more than one attendance area in a school which also provides a regular program to students from a specific attendance

boundary. Students from both the magnet and the regular program are provided opportunities to interact with each other to the extent possible.

B. Magnet School (Schoolwide): A magnet school offers unique instructional programs or settings to all students attending the school and are categorized as follows:

1. **Magnet School with an Attendance Boundary:** A magnet school with an attendance boundary is a school which serves all students from its designated attendance boundary as well as a specified number of students from schools throughout the district.
2. **Magnet School without an Attendance Boundary:** A magnet school without an attendance boundary is a school which serves eligible students throughout the district, and which has no designated attendance boundary of its own.

II. Guidelines and Procedures

The Superintendent of Schools shall establish administrative procedures and guidelines to address the following issues which are related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of magnet programs/schools.

A. Planning

1. To determine the need for a magnet program/school, special consideration shall be given to the following:
 - a) public interest in particular magnet themes;
 - b) the need to stem declining enrollment or mitigate overcrowding;
 - c) improving the quality of education through proven curricular and instructional approaches;
 - d) expanding public school choice options for parents/guardians, inclusive of commuter and workplace magnet schools;
 - e) ensuring equitable access for all students;
 - f) budgetary constraints;
 - g) availability of support, fiscal or otherwise, from outside sources (e.g. municipalities, grants, etc.); and/or
 - h) enhancing diverse student enrollments.
2. Proposals for new magnet programs/schools shall be annually considered by the Equity and Access Administrative Council. Recommendations of the school's administrative and instructional

staff, and regional and district staffs should play a major role in the selection of the program's theme/focus, as well.

3. To determine the enrollment level needed to offer a viable program, staff, including representatives from the school, corresponding regional center(s), and district will establish both a minimum number and a maximum number of students to be served by each magnet program/school. Said numbers will be published on an annual basis.

B. Implementation

School Choice and Parental Options (or comparable district office/department) will conduct countywide marketing and recruitment activities beginning in the fall of each school year with the goal of achieving a broadly diverse student population reflective of the diversity in the student population district-wide.

1. Each magnet program/school will conduct marketing and recruitment activities specific to their program's/school's theme or purpose, including but not limited to:
 - a) mailed brochures;
 - b) automated phone messages;
 - c) open houses and school tours; and
 - d) presentations at feeder schools.
2. Annually, prior to the beginning of the recruitment period on October 1st, each magnet program/school principal, in conjunction with the corresponding regional center(s) and School Choice and Parental Options (or comparable district office/department), will identify the number of magnet program/school seats available at the magnet program/school by grade level. The overall diversity of the magnet program/school will be reviewed by School Choice and Parental Options following the initial Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) reporting week in the fall.
3. Recruitment for magnet programs/schools for the subsequent school year shall begin on or about the first day of October and conclude on or about the 15th day of January. A series of promotional/informational events and materials will be planned and disseminated district-wide to coincide with this timeframe.
4. One of the goals of magnet programs/schools is to recruit students whose unique language needs or abilities, socio-economic circumstances, race, ethnicity, gender, and exceptional

education needs are underrepresented in the magnet program/school. Another goal is to ensure that students have adequate opportunities to enroll in educational programs which may not be available in their boundary school. In order to meet these goals, each school, in conjunction with School Choice and Parental Options (or comparable district office/department), will develop targeted recruitment goals and strategies consistent with the goals of the Equity and Access Plan.

5. School Choice and Parental Options (or comparable district office/department), in conjunction with the Information Technology Services (or comparable district office/department), will process all magnet applications centrally via an on-line application process. Parents/Guardians may also mail or hand-deliver paper applications to School Choice and Parental Options (or comparable district office/department) prior to the deadline.
6. Applications for admission to magnet programs/schools must be received by January 15th of the school year preceding the year for which admission to the program/school is sought. Application forms for magnet programs/schools shall be freely available at all Miami-Dade County Public Schools and through the district's website prior to the commencement of the application period.
7. Applicants who are part of a multiple birth (twins, triplets, quadruplets, etc.) will be admitted when one of them is selected for admission to the same magnet program/school through the random selection process. However, each of the multiple birth siblings must meet the eligibility requirements for the selected magnet program/school.
8. Magnet programs/schools will advise applicants who have met the application deadline of the application outcome on or about March 15th. For applicants receiving an offer of acceptance, parents/guardians must accept or decline the admission offer into the applied for magnet program(s)/school(s) on or before March 31st. Failure to respond by March 31st shall be considered as a rejection of the offer of admission to the program.
9. Students who are eligible to be enrolled in a Miami-Dade County Public School, or will be enrolled in a grade level served by a magnet program/school, may apply for admission. Various admission criteria have been established for entrance into each magnet program/school appropriate to the specific theme or focus. Eligibility may be determined by, but are not limited to, such factors as skill, talent, academic performance, conduct, written

essay, and interest. However, no single factor may be used to exclude a student from access in the program. At no time may a single standardized test score, such as the FCAT, be the sole determination of eligibility. Eligibility criteria must be related to the educational needs of the magnet program/school and must not create unnecessary barriers to equitable access. School Operations, in conjunction with Curriculum and Assessment (or comparable district offices/departments), will review and approve eligibility criteria annually. Entrance level criteria which differs from the approved factors must be authorized by the Superintendent's designee. Principals must submit the entrance level criteria for magnet programs/schools School Choice and Parental Options (or comparable district office/department), no later than June 30th and make such criteria readily available to parents/guardians for review when applying. Applications to magnet programs/schools will become void upon the conclusion of the school year in which they were submitted.

10. Enhancement opportunities may be provided to prepare students, including at-risk, handicapped, and limited English proficient students for magnet program/school entry. These opportunities may include internships, outreach, summer enrichment, and mentoring programs.
11. Notwithstanding the admission processes delineated within this Rule, the Superintendent (or Superintendent's designee) may override any aspect of said processes when determined by the District to be in the best interest of the student.
12. Upon submission of a completed application by the designated deadline and fulfillment of all applicable eligibility requirements, students will be admitted to non-talent magnet programs/schools on a random selection basis according to the following process:
 - a. Magnet Program (School-within-a-School):**
 - i. Up to 50 percent, but not less than 25 percent, of the available seats at entry level of the magnet program shall be randomly selected from eligible applicants residing in the school's attendance boundary areas with admission guaranteed to eligible applicants with older siblings already attending the magnet program whose enrollment will be concurrent with that of the older sibling(s) for at least the initial year of their admission. An additional priority weight may be added to help fulfill Equity and

Access Plan goals.

- ii. The remaining seats will be randomly filled with eligible students outside of the school's attendance boundary with admission guaranteed to eligible applicants with older siblings already attending the magnet program whose enrollment will be concurrent with that of the older sibling(s) for at least the initial year of their admission.
- iii. Application for seats open in grade levels other than the designated entry grade will be assigned through the random selection process. Seats which become available beyond the entry level will be guaranteed to eligible applicants with older siblings already attending the magnet program whose enrollment will be concurrent with that of the older sibling(s) for at least the initial year of their admission. A priority weight will be allocated for successful matriculation from a magnet program/school with a similar theme.

b. Magnet School with an Attendance Boundary (Schoolwide):

- i. Students residing in the attendance boundary area of the magnet school will be assigned first.
- ii. The remaining available seats will be filled by eligible applicants residing outside of the school's attendance boundary, with admission guaranteed to eligible applicants with older siblings already attending the magnet program whose enrollment will be concurrent with that of the older sibling(s) for at least the initial year of their admission. Priority weights may be added for matriculation from a magnet program/school with a similar theme and/or in order to help fulfill Equity and Access Plan goals, at such time as those goals are established by the District.
- iii. In order to maintain the designation as a schoolwide magnet with an attendance boundary, a minimum of 25 percent of the magnet program/school population must be filled by eligible students from outside the school's attendance boundary. If the 25 percent threshold is not achievable, the magnet school may be re-designated as a magnet program serving a subset of the school population and budgeted accordingly.

c. Magnet School without an Attendance Boundary (Schoolwide):

- i. Eligible applicants seeking admission to a magnet school without an attendance boundary will be selected through a random selection process.
 - ii. Admission will be guaranteed to eligible applicants with older siblings already attending the magnet program whose enrollment will be concurrent with that of the older sibling(s) for at least the initial year of their admission. Priority weights may be added for matriculation from a magnet program/school with a similar theme and/or in order to help fulfill Equity and Access Plan goals.
13. Student recruitment efforts shall continue in magnet programs/schools until all available seats are filled.
 14. Students submitting an application for a talent magnet program/school will be evaluated on the specific criteria related to each art form during the required audition and will be ranked and placed on the basis of their audition scores. Magnet program/school principals, in conjunction with School Operations (or comparable district office/department), shall be responsible for selecting a diverse panel of adjudicators. A minimum of one adjudicator may be designated at auditions at the discretion of the Superintendent's designee. Selection of students for talent programs will be based solely on the specific talent aligned to each magnet program strand. Academic achievement may not be used as the sole determination in the selection process, but may be a factor for continued enrollment in the program.

C. Evaluation

1. Each year, School Choice and Parental Options (or comparable district office/department) will review magnet application and enrollment data for the purpose of assessing the degree to which recruitment goals have been met. If deemed necessary, the Superintendent's designee will recommend appropriate strategies and/or modifications.
2. Each year the Superintendent's designee will review magnet application and enrollment data.
3. An annual administrative review of existing magnet

programs/schools shall be conducted by the Equity and Access Administrative Council and the Assessment and Data Analysis (or comparable district offices/departments) to determine the impact of magnet programs/schools on the diversity of student enrollment, academic achievement, and student attendance.

4. Formal evaluations of magnet programs/schools may be authorized as resources permit and/or circumstances warrant such action.

Specific Authority: 1001.41(1),(2); 1001.42(23); 1001.43(10) F.S.

Law Implemented, Interpreted, or Made Specific: 1001.41(6); 1001.43(3),(8); 1001.42(4),(a); 1001.32(2); 1002.31, F.S.

History: THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

New: 9-10-08