

Creating/Maintaining Magnet Schools

Magnet schools are free public elementary and secondary schools of choice operated by the School District that provide alternative learning opportunities to traditional public schools. Magnet schools have a specialized area of study or educational program used throughout the school and may be exempt from following certain policies and procedures with Board approval (such as alternative bell schedules and changes to teacher preparation time) in order to better meet their particular program goals. There is no additional state financial support for magnet schools.

Magnet schools, as opposed to traditional public schools or focus schools, do not have an associated Attendance Zone (see definition of "Attendance Zone" below). Magnet schools are open to all students within the District, although enrollment priority may be granted by the Board for students residing within a Magnet Priority Zone (defined below), for students with siblings already attending the magnet school, and for students who meet other relevant priority factors. Board Policy 3012 outlines Magnet School Enrollment Standards.

Any group/school interested in attaining magnet school designation must begin the process by applying to the Board for approval. In this application process, the applicant must (1) establish clear goals for the proposed magnet program and define how such goals can improve the overall climate of the school; (2) gauge community interest and support (such as through the use of petitions of interest/public forum meetings); (3) demonstrate adequate support by key players within the District (including recommendations of approval from the appropriate Director of Elementary or Secondary Education, and identification of potential administrative teams and staff); (4) identify potential opportunities and resources that may influence the success of the program; and (5) identify potential enrollment methods and goals for attendance, including whether a Magnet Priority Zone should be applied.

The Board directs the Superintendent or designee to develop an application process consistent with these broad concepts. The Superintendent will act as the initial gatekeeper for applications and will present them to the Board when they are deemed complete and ready for Board review.

Once approved as a magnet school, the Board will continue to monitor each magnet school's established progress. This monitoring may include setting initial 3-year or 5-year benchmarks to demonstrate that the magnet school has established itself as a sustainable magnet school program. After meeting these initial benchmarks, the magnet school will provide annual summaries of the school's successes and future plans. The Board reserves the right to attach conditions, revoke a magnet school designation and/or take other actions to ensure, to the satisfaction of the Board, that the magnet school is self-sufficient and meeting expectations.

Creating a Magnet Priority Zone

Whether or not a magnet school should utilize a Magnet Priority Zone in its enrollment standards shall be a decision of the Board. When considering whether to establish a Magnet Priority Zone for a magnet school, the Board may consider the importance of granting priority enrollment opportunities based on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to:

- (i) proximity to the magnet school, including walkability and the importance of creating a “neighborhood” school community;
- (ii) balancing potential impacts on neighboring schools based on past and projected enrollment trends;
- (iii) meeting capacity limitations of other District schools;
- (iv) drawing students in from outside of the Magnet Priority Zone by establishing particular in-zone/out-of-zone ratios;
- (v) ensuring socioeconomic balance among District schools; and
- (vi) meeting the approved enrollment goals for the particular magnet school at issue.

A magnet school need not be located within the corresponding Magnet Priority Zone. A Magnet Priority Zone need not be contiguous and may consist of multiple areas within the District boundaries. The Board has the discretion to establish and adjust Magnet Priority Zone boundaries in keeping with the magnet school’s enrollment goals.

The Board may adjust the boundaries of a Magnet Priority Zone at any time and desires to formally review the boundaries periodically (not less than every three (3) years). If magnet school leadership determines that a Magnet Priority Zone is no longer appropriate, the magnet school principal may apply to the Board to eliminate the Magnet Priority Zone. The magnet school applicant must demonstrate to the Board why a Magnet Priority Zone is no longer appropriate in meeting those goals. Whether or not to eliminate the Magnet Priority Zone is within the discretion of the Board.

Definitions

Attendance Zone. An attendance zone is an area within the District boundary within which a single elementary school, middle school or high school exists. A student identifies their “home” school by locating their primary residence on the attendance zone map and identifying the corresponding school within that attendance zone. The Board of Trustees establishes Attendance Zones. The District’s magnet schools do not have corresponding Attendance Zones.

Magnet Priority Zones. A Magnet Priority Zone is an area within the District boundary that overlaps existing Attendance Zones. Each magnet school may be assigned a Magnet Priority Zone. A student residing within a Magnet Priority Zone would still use the corresponding Attendance Zone school as his or her “home” school for enrollment purposes, but would also have certain priority rights if he/she chose to apply to the magnet school corresponding to the relevant Magnet Priority Zone.

Cross Reference: 3010 Open Enrollment
3012 Magnet School Enrollment Standards

Legal References: I.C. § 33-1402-1404 Enrollment Options

Policy History:

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Revised on: