



# Preliminary Report to the Board of Education: Findings and Recommendations

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# Overview

1. Essential Questions
2. Five Pillars of Magnet Schools
3. Methodology
4. Key Findings
5. Recommendations

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1. **Essential Questions**
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# Essential Questions

*Jefferson County Public Schools asked Magnet Schools of America to answer three essential questions regarding its magnet programs:*

1. Are the magnet programs ***magnetic***?
2. Are the magnet programs ***diverse***?
3. Are the magnet programs ***promoting achievement***?

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# Five Pillars of Magnet Schools

Effective magnet programs are built around these **five pillars**:

1. Diversity
2. Innovative Curriculum and Professional Development
3. Academic Excellence
4. High Quality Instructional Systems
5. Family and Community Partnerships

# Five Pillars: Diversity

**Diversity** is the cornerstone to offering students a global educational experience.

- Schools, through recruitment and lotteries, strive to have student populations that are reflective of the community.
- Culturally proficient educational environments model empathy, respect, and working collaboratively with a variety of persons.
- Diverse school environments (racial, religious, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, etc.) promote higher student achievement, critical thinking, empathy, cross-cultural communication skills and other social benefits.

# Five Pillars: Curriculum & PD

**Innovative Curriculum and Professional Development** is developed to assure theme-based curriculum is supported by appropriate pedagogy.

- Effective teaching strategies, emulating from research-based best practices, are implemented throughout instruction of the school's theme.
- The magnet curriculum is based on high-quality, rigorous standards that prepare students for higher education and career success.
- Professional training addresses issues of equity and excellence for all students to thrive.



# Five Pillars: Academic Excellence

**Academic Excellence** is demonstrated through a commitment to multi-dimensional instruction focused on learner needs.

- Multiple assessment strategies are employed to monitor student learning, progress, and success.
- High expectations are clearly articulated and personalized supports are in place to address the interests and aspirations of all students.

# Five Pillars: Instructional Systems

**High Quality Instructional Systems** are rooted in well-prepared, well-educated professional educator.

- Teachers and administrators who are student-centered, collaborative, and inquisitive prepare learners to be world ready, workforce ready, and higher education ready.

# Five Pillars: Partnerships

**Family and Community Partnerships** are mutually beneficial, offer a system of support, shared ownership, and a caring spirit, and are designed to enhance a theme-integrated educational environment.

- Partnerships with parents are essential for a rich educational experience for students.
- Community partnerships include a diverse array of stakeholders including business, health and human services, and policy makers to support the education of all students.

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# Methodology

The magnet review methodology was developed to provide a multi-faceted perspective on JCPS programs related to the three essential questions.

- Quantitative data analysis
- Community survey analysis
- School site visits & principal interviews
- Community meetings
- Interviews with district administrators
- National Magnet School Standards

# Methodology: Data Analysis

- JCPS provided MSA with numerous data sets:
  - Disaggregated student achievement results by school and magnet program for SY 2011-12 and 2012-13.
  - Students exited from magnet programs for SY 2011-12.
  - Diversity Index for 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years
  - Student Tracker Reports from National Student Clearinghouse (January 2014 data).
- MSA analyzed student achievement, program exit data, diversity rates, college attendance rates, and post-high school outcomes for magnet school graduates of each school and magnet program.

# Methodology: Survey Analysis

- Survey instrument developed to gather community feedback on magnet programs.
- Questions focused on the perception of the magnet schools, student selection process, possible new themes, overall interest, and rigor of district magnet program.
- Over 1,300 responses received.

# Methodology: School Site Visits

- Sent team of magnet school experts to Louisville
- Visited all 59 magnet programs
  - Interviewed principals and administrators
  - Toured school facilities
  - Observed classroom instruction
  - Met with groups of parents, teachers, and students



# Methodology: Community Meetings

- Hosted six community meetings at two school locations.
- Participants were asked questions similar to those that were asked in the survey.
- Attendance ranged from 7-17 attendees per session and included parents, community members, and students.

# Methodology: District Data

- Interviewed district administrators before, during, and after site visits.
- Received information regarding when each magnet program was started.
- Reviewed application process.
- Reviewed district funding for magnet schools and school budgets.

# Methodology: National Standards



## Magnet Schools of America Certification Standards

2/26/2014

### Standard 1: Student Recruitment and Selection

- a. The magnet school has an annual recruitment and marketing plan that outlines details of how new students will be encouraged to apply to and attend the school (including who does what, when, and where).
- b. The magnet school recruitment and marketing plan includes the collection and review of indicators for success (including reduction of minority group isolation).
- c. Prior recruitment and marketing data is reviewed to evaluate and adjust the plan.
- d. The school and district use a clear and transparent lottery system with published standards.
- e. Magnet transportation policies for students are available to ensure all magnet students have equitable access to magnet schools and programs.
- f. The school's current enrollment meets the definition of integration.

### Standard 2: Diversity and Equity

- a. The magnet program attracts and retains students to support integration and diversity.
- b. Magnet school student enrollment - including all classes and programs - reflects the demographic diversity of the district and community.
- c. The magnet school has a policy or statement that emphasizes the importance of student diversity.
- d. The school has a plan that aligns professional development to the needs of the school (i.e. eliminating racial predictability in student achievement).
- e. School staff receives training that builds cultural proficiency.
- f. All magnet students participate in the theme, and student enrichment opportunities are available to all students based on their level of interest and ability.

### Standard 3: Environment

- a. The school fosters an environment that is safe, warm, inviting, collaborative and conducive for learning.
- b. The school provides a physical environment of the school is appropriate for the type of instruction and theme.
- c. The physical environment reflects the theme of the magnet school.

- MSA has developed national standards that magnet schools can use to develop successful programs.
- Standards based on research and best practices of successful magnet programs.

# Methodology: National Standards

Are JCPS magnet programs *diverse*?

- Standard 1: Student Recruitment and Selection
- Standard 2: Diversity and Equity
- Standard 13: *Magnet and District Relations*

# Methodology: National Standards

Are JCPS magnet programs *magnetic*?

- Standard 3: Environment
- Standard 4: Theme Fidelity
- Standard 5: Curriculum Fidelity
- Standard 8: Educator Development & Leadership
- Standard 9: Leadership
- Standard 10: Effective Organization & Systemic Improvement
- Standard 11: Community Engagement and Partnerships
- Standard 12: Family Engagement and Communication
- Standard 13: *Magnet and District Relations*

# Methodology: National Standards

Are JCPS magnet programs *promoting achievement*?

- Standard 6: Instructional Fidelity
- Standard 7: Student Achievement
- Standard 13: *Magnet and District Relations*

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# Key Findings: Diversity

## *Standard 1: Student Recruitment and Selection*

- Student recruitment and marketing is done primarily by the district, and schools rarely go beyond the *Showcase of Schools* to recruit students.
- Waiting lists varied greatly. Some schools had little or no wait list, whereas others had waiting lists of hundreds of students.
- Some programs had as few as three students in them, and some schools had fewer than 10% “magnet” students enrolled.
- Schools started in the 2009 cohort are *less* diverse than more established (older) magnet schools and programs.
- Schools in the *Central Corridor* were most likely to be closer to the 2.0 average.
- Schools in the *Western Corridor* are closer to 1.5 and the Eastern Corridor are at 2.3.



# Key Findings: Diversity

## *Standard 2: Diversity and Equity*

- Students with special needs and English Language Learners (ELL) are under-represented and under-served by magnet schools.

# Key Findings: Diversity

## *Standard 13: Magnet and District Relations*

- Traditional programs/schools may be detrimental to the diversity goals of the district.
- Lack of transparency of selection criteria and local selection of students make it difficult for the district to achieve diversity in its magnet schools.

# Key Findings: Magnetic

## *Standard 13: Magnet and District Relations*

- Transportation to magnet schools is effective and appears to be efficient.
- District level staff is committed to magnet programs being successful viable choice options for JCPS families.
- District market share of student enrollment is due in large part to magnet and choice programs.
- Math, Science, Technology (MST) schools lack consistency and grade-level articulation (K-12) as well as an Engineering focus (STEM).
- Visual & Performing Arts schools lack consistency and grade level articulation(K-12).
- Exiting of students from magnet schools, especially in the elementary and middle traditional schools, is concerning.

# Key Findings: Magnetic

Are JCP magnet programs *magnetic*? Sometimes in some places.

## *Standard 3: Environment*

- Facilities range in quality and ability to support the theme.
- Industry-standard equipment is lacking in many secondary programs.

## *Standard 4: Theme Fidelity*

- Many magnet schools lack a cohesive instructional focus that supports the theme of the school.

# Key Findings: Magnetic

## *Standard 5: Curriculum Fidelity*

- Magnet curriculum varied by school and theme and was not often integrated throughout the day (with a few exceptions).
- Magnet theme curriculum fidelity varies widely by like-themed schools.

## *Standard 8: Educator Development & Leadership*

- Professional training for teachers and principals around the magnet theme does not exist.
- Teachers in like-themed schools do not have the opportunity to collaborate and exchange best practices across campuses and grade levels.
- Principals have not been provided training to lead and support theme-based schools.

# Key Findings: Magnetic

## *Standard 9: Leadership*

- Magnet school administrators' understanding of the purpose and goals of magnet schools in JCPS varied widely.
- Teachers and principals are not necessarily selected for their ability to teach or interest in working in a theme-based magnet school.
- District office does not have sufficient resources to provide leadership or training for magnet schools at this time.

# Key Findings: Magnetic

## *Standard 10: Effective Organization & Systemic Improvement*

- School staff spend an extraordinary amount of precious time selecting students (lottery schools exempt).
- Magnet school student achievement is not often analyzed; schools are not comparing magnet student to non-magnet student (reside) achievement in the same school to address systemic inequities and outcomes.

# Key Findings: Magnetic

## *Standard 11: Community Engagement and Partnerships*

- University of Louisville is an established and critical partner of magnet schools, as are several other local businesses.
- Magnet schools are limited in their ability to seek additional partnerships and funding to support the theme and opportunities for students.
- Schools do not have equitable access to resources outside the district that could support the magnet program.



# Key Findings: Magnetic

## *Standard 12: Family Engagement and Communication*

- Parents believe that the magnet schools are keeping students in the district and serve an important purpose.
- School choice in JCPS is extremely complex and unclear to many families, especially new families to the area.
- The student enrollment and selection process is unclear, confusing, cumbersome, and varies widely by school.
- Parents often apply to magnet schools to “escape” something they perceive as worse.
- Many families are unaware of the many programs available to them and their students despite district efforts.
- Marketing materials are limited, provided in English only, and may not be accessible to all members of the community.

# Key Findings: Achievement

## *Standard 6: Instructional Fidelity*

- Magnet programs within schools have inequitable outcomes, and minority and low-income student achievement is still low.
- There is not necessarily a correlation between student achievement and the quality of the magnet curriculum.

## *Standard 7: Student Achievement*

- Magnet programs within schools had lower student achievement than whole-school programs
- Schools that select students based on academic criteria preclude many students from the opportunity to enroll in a theme-based school of interest to them.

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# Recommendations

## *Standard 13: Magnet and District Relations*

1. JCPS **must** a) define the vision for magnet schools, b) clarify the purpose of the magnet programs and schools, and c) create goals for the district magnet program overall. All stakeholders must understand the purpose of the magnet schools and why they exist.

2. JCPS should create a community task force or steering committee to determine the purpose, scope, and types of program offerings within the district, including the magnet and choice programs being offered within zones. The goal of the task force should be to create a *five-year strategic plan* that addresses the findings and recommendations of this review.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 13: Magnet and District Relations*

3. The Traditional model must be aligned to research and best practices for effective schools. JCPS Board Policy on traditional schools, including the following, should be updated through an inclusive process:

- Purpose, philosophy, goals and expectations of the traditional program
- Academic program (curriculum and instruction)
- Student discipline practices and policies
- Removal and exiting of students, especially at the elementary and middle school levels
- Feeder patterns

# Recommendations

## *Standard 13: Magnet and District Relations*

4. The district should create a process to eliminate redundant, ineffective and undesirable programs within one year. This process should require that affected schools develop a *magnet school plan* that addresses the school-wide instructional focus, integration of the magnet theme across the curriculum, and recruitment of students if they are to remain magnet schools. Schools that fail to do so adequately should be discontinued in 2015-16.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 13: Magnet and District Relations*

5. The district should create a process for identifying schools and programs that should be created or replicated in other areas of the district as “mirror magnets” based on the following tenants:

- Program structure, fidelity, and best practices
- Student demand
- Student diversity
- Student achievement
- Facilities
- Teacher and principal training
- Reasonable and cost effective transportation

# Recommendations

## *Standard 13: Magnet and District Relations*

6. Should the district decide to replicate and expand programs, they must do so in a manner that is *cost-effective*, adequately *prepares staff*, and *provides facilities* that can accommodate the theme with industry-standard equipment. These new and mirror magnet programs should ensure that students apply to the program and then are assigned to a school.



# Recommendations

## *Standard 13: Magnet and District Relations*

7. JCPS staff should convene a work group to evaluate the network magnet programs that were not evaluated by MSA.

8. JCPS should eliminate magnet programs that have low student enrollment, achievement, diversity and are not viable based on MSA's review.

9. JCPS should require all magnet schools to submit a plan for student recruitment, professional development, curriculum and instruction to the magnet office annually.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 1: Student Recruitment and Selection*

10. JCPS should adopt a centralized application process, screening for school qualification, and random lottery for *all schools*.

10a. DuPont Manual High School should remain selective but add a transparent application process that is clear, accessible, and outlines entrance criteria. The student enrollment process for Manual should include a transparent point system in which each application is assigned a score with publically available cut scores. Students should receive their score and placement on the waiting list.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 2: Diversity and Equity*

11. All JCPS students should have access to all magnet programs. JCPS should provide transportation to Brown.

## *Standard 3: Environment*

12. Industry-standard equipment at the secondary level is necessary.

13. JCPS should conduct a facilities assessment to ensure magnet schools are attractive to families, and can support the capacity and theme of the magnet school.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 4: Theme Fidelity*

14. JCPS should adopt the Career Academy model at Southern, Central, and Iroquois High Schools to offer students robust internships and career opportunities.

## *Standard 5: Curriculum Fidelity*

15. The JCPS central office magnet staff should be organized to work more collaboratively with Teaching & Learning.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 6: Instructional Fidelity*

- Each magnet school should have a written curriculum related to its theme.
- At least annually, school staff should compare the planned curriculum to what is taught and assessed.

## *Standard 7: Student Achievement*

- Magnet schools should analyze student achievement and discipline data by demographic groups (race, socioeconomic status, linguistic, etc.) to ensure that they are eliminating achievement disparities.
- Schools must develop tiered intervention programs to support all students in achieving at high levels in the magnet program.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 8: Educator Development & Leadership*

16. JCPS should provide teachers and magnet coordinators with PD on theme integration and magnet curriculum development.

## *Standard 9: Leadership*

17. JCPS support for magnet schools requires a District Director of Magnet Programs who oversees magnet school curriculum, instruction, and theme integration of all district-wide magnet schools. This person also should convene school staff by theme and instructional focus, coordinate professional development, training, and facilities.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 10: Effective Organization & Systemic Improvement*

18. JCPS should conduct a fiscal analysis to assess the cost savings of eliminating programs and investing in existing ones to determine the capacity of the district to support high-quality magnet options for all students.

19. JCPS magnet staff at the school and district level should find exemplary national models of similar schools and districts to visit and learn from immediately.

# Recommendations

## *Standard 11: Community Engagement and Partnerships*

20. A district industry advisory board of community stakeholders, that focuses on magnet themes, should be convened quarterly to provide feedback and suggestions for continuous improvement.

## *Standard 12: Family Engagement and Communication*

21. Marketing materials, magnet program information and applications should be provided in multiple languages.



# Questions & Comments