

Magnet Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
August 18, 2016
4:30-6:30 p.m.
Gheens Academy

Members Present:

✓	William Allen	✓	Sam Cowan	✓	Zina Knight	✓	Dana Kelly	Trina Steiden
✓	David Baugh	✓	Giselle Danger-Mercaderes		John Marshall	✓	Chlise Robinson	Milan Bailey
	Tammy Berlin	✓	Barbara Dempsey	✓	Kathy McGinnis		Mike Shelton	
	Enakshi Bose		Charles Dixon		Kumar Rashad		Cassandra Shepherd	
	Karen Branham		Bryce Hibbard	✓	Michelle Pennix		Shantai Tudor	
✓	Chris Burba	✓	Michael Hirn		Shantel Reed		Felicia Young	

The meeting began at 4:47 p.m. (delayed due to traffic issues preventing participant arrival).

This was the first meeting of the full Magnet Steering Committee for 2016-17. The facilitators began the meeting with a brief review of the Magnet Mission and committee processes describe on the Committee Charter.

Several updates to members included:

1. **Traditional Program Guidelines:** Passed by the Board on July 26, 2016 with one change to wording on discipline.
2. **New Magnet Application tool:** Introduced to principals July 21, 2016. Kathy McGinnis shared a link to the online application and informed principals that the Magnet Steering Committee is reviewing program standards aligned to this application, which will be similar to MSA Standards of Excellence. A district cross-functional team will be developed that will review new magnet applications.
3. **Board request:** Updates and recommendations on (a) magnet program standards, and (b) magnet student exit process on September 27, 2016.

The majority of the meeting was spent reviewing draft documents related to the two topics the committee will present to the Board of Education in a work session on September 27, 2016.

Magnet Program Standards and Indicators

An initial draft of magnet program standards was presented to the full steering committee for review and feedback ¹. Before reviewing the document, several members asked clarifying questions to confirm the purpose of the magnet program standards discussed in Spring 2016. The Committee reviewed the purpose as being the foundation of a system with common standards and indicators used to establish new magnets and review existing magnet programs. Thus, schools can use these standards to develop a proposal with best practices for creating a sustainable, “magnetic” program, and schools subsequently can use these same program standards for regular self-reflection as part of a formal evaluative process. All Committee members present agreed on this purpose.

¹ In June and August 2016, the Core Team of the Magnet Steering Committee reviewed the Magnet Schools of America *Standards of Excellence* to determine whether any portion of these standards would be useful as a foundation for Jcps magnet programs. Team members provided initial input (e.g., several standards were deleted; several Jcps-specific standards were added; feedback and questions were posed on potential redundancy and areas for clarification) and developed an initial draft of Jcps Magnet Program Standards.

Committee members reviewed individual sections of the document in small groups and shared out with the full committee. In small groups, they focused on two broad questions: (1) Which indicators are most critical for magnet programs to demonstrate success?, and (2) which indicators are NOT necessary or inappropriate for JCPS magnets (e.g., against JCPS policy, already documented for all schools elsewhere)?

Several members noted potential points of redundancy between some standards, between this document and other district documents/expectations for all schools, and a need for more simple language for some standards. Some discussion ensued about whether viewpoints on redundancies are somewhat relative depending on the reader. The Committee agreed to try reduce and consolidate standards in cases of clear redundancy to simplify the document as much as possible, especially when expectations align with all JCPS schools and not just 'magnets'. Questions were raised about whether this document should include standards referencing district expectations or school program expectations only (which creates some confusion), whether certain standards would be difficult to measure, and other standards on Diversity could pose challenges for within-school magnet programs or for schools without ESL or ECE units. This feedback will be incorporated as line edits and sent back to the full committee via email for further comment.

The committee agreed that additional stakeholder input is necessary on these standards, and facilitators will coordinate groups of principals, teachers, and students to review the draft produced by the steering committee. The goal is to finalize a draft by September 8th incorporating feedback from all stakeholders. The draft standards with questions and proposed edits are attached (ATTACHMENT 1).

Magnet Student Exit Process

The Board of Education requested that the Magnet Steering Committee review the current Options/Magnet Schools and Programs Student Exit Process. While this was not an explicit recommendation in the 2014 Magnet Schools of America (MSA) report, the MSA did raise questions about the district policy in their report.

The Committee reviewed: (1) a Magnet Student Exit Trend Report including analysis of data from 2011-12 through 2015-16 school years (ATTACHMENT 2), and (2) recommendations and feedback on the current student exit process suggested by Core Team (ATTACHMENT 3). The data report was requested by the Application Process and School Access Subcommittee in July 2016 to get a better understanding of the scope and magnitude of student exits across magnet schools and programs. The report was reviewed by the Core Team (which includes members of the subcommittee) on August 2nd for feedback². From the data findings, the Core Team and subcommittee drafted recommendations to the full steering committee for review and feedback.

The data report is based on Student Exit Forms submitted to the Magnet Office for any magnet student that leaves a magnet program. Reasons for student departure can be student/family-initiated (e.g., moving out of school district; preference for another school) or school-initiated (e.g., inadequate grades or behavior issues that do not align with the magnet program's guidelines). Thus, all departures from magnet programs are labeled 'exits', including general family mobility. Approximately 4.7% of magnet students transfer to other schools or programs yearly as compared to about 9% of non-magnet students enrolled in JCPS comprehensive programs. Of this 4.7% of magnet students that transfer, about 2% are school-initiated transfers. One important caveat to the data report is that some schools have been more consistent than others in fully completing the Student Exit Forms and providing rationale for students leaving their program. Furthermore, certain schools initiate exits more often, while other magnets do not initiate exits at all (only family-initiated transfers).

² The data report and corresponding draft proposal also were reviewed by the Chief of Data Management, Planning, and Program Evaluation to adhere to internal review processes used for any JCPS data/evaluation reports generated for public consumption.

Considerable discussion ensued between steering committee members on multiple sides of the student exit process, which are paraphrased below:

- (1) Why are we spending so much time on such a small number of students when the evidence does not suggest a major problem?
- (2) Why are magnet schools and programs allowed to initiate exits when other comprehensive programs cannot?
- (3) Students choose to apply to magnet programs with special guidelines. Shouldn't these schools be allowed to uphold their expectations when students do not meet these program guidelines?
- (4) Why should non-magnet schools be required to take more students with academic and behavioral challenges? Doesn't this create more disparity?
- (5) Shouldn't we focus more on improving program retention than on exiting? What can magnet programs do to make families want to stay and help students be successful?

The Committee finally came to a general consensus that the goal is to improve the current process to enhance opportunities for student success and achievement so that school-initiated exiting is used as a last resort. The Committee broke into small groups and briefly reviewed the proposal and recommendations, offered initial feedback in the time available, and agreed to follow-up with additional input.

The facilitators will take input from the steering committee, draft a survey with proposals for community and school review (magnet and non-magnet), and resend to the committee for additional feedback. Facilitators will try to schedule community engagement opportunities between September 6-14, 2016. Some concerns were expressed about the feasibility of obtaining input from so many role groups in short time. The facilitators agreed that the scheduling of these activities and development of a final draft proposal to the Board will depend on the "comfort level" of the full committee by mid-September. If committee members are not satisfied with progress by September 15th, they will come to consensus on what should be communicated to the Board on September 27th with clear rationale.

Next Steps

The Facilitators and Committee members will be responsible for completing the following actions according to the proposed schedule:

When?	What?	Who?	Action?
Aug 24	Magnet Program Standards Magnet Student Exit Process suggestions Magnet Student Exit Policy survey	Facilitators	Send for review
Aug 30	Magnet Program Standards Magnet Student Exit Process suggestions Magnet Student Exit Policy survey	Committee	Provide feedback
Sep 6-12	Magnet Program Standards Magnet Student Exit Policy survey	Facilitators	Coordinate stakeholder input
Sep 13	Magnet Program Standards Magnet Student Exit Process suggestions	Committee	Provide FINAL feedback
Sep 15	Magnet Program Standards Magnet Student Exit Process suggestions	Committee	Consensus during meeting

Next meetings:

Thursday, September 1 – Core Team

Thursday, September 15 – Magnet Steering Committee

Tuesday, September 27 – Board work session (NOTE: no actions or approval is given during work sessions).