

MAGNET SCHOOL PROGRAMS

FILE: JFBD

TITLE: Magnet Schools and Magnet Programs

POLICY:

(1) Purpose.

The School Board of Orange County, Florida (“Board”) and Orange County Public Schools (“OCPS”) (collectively “District”) are committed to providing quality educational opportunities for all students by providing an educational environment that enhances each student’s educational success. The District will continue to implement magnet schools and magnet programs as one strategy, thereby providing quality educational opportunities for students in diverse educational settings.

Magnet schools and magnet programs have five (5) goals:

- (a) To maintain academic rigor and reflect the diversity of the District;
- (b) To provide students the opportunity to exceed challenging state academic and achievement standards;
- (c) To promote student diversity through choice;
- (d) To strengthen student knowledge in subject areas that will lead to increased student acquisition of marketable career, technological, and professional skills to inform career decisions; and
- (e) To support student achievement.

(2) Types of Magnet Schools and Magnet Programs.

At the elementary and middle school levels, the District has implemented either total school magnet programs or specialty magnet programs within a particular school. At the high school level, the District has implemented specialty magnet programs within particular schools. Future implementation may include total school magnet programs at any level as well as specialty magnet programs within a school.

(3) Recruitment.

Magnet programs create enriching and diverse pathways that allow students to focus on their interests, talents, and career goals. To this end, the Office of School Choice Services will collaborate with magnet schools and programs to develop a recruitment plan to inform students, parents/legal guardians, and the community of the diverse options available.

(4) Academic or Related Eligibility Criteria.

- (i) Elementary School Level: At the elementary level, no school shall use academic or related criteria for determining whether a student is eligible for

a magnet school or magnet program, with the exception of the Orlando Gifted Academy as detailed herein. In addition, the student's schedule must be able to accommodate the required magnet classes in any grade K-5. For students entering Kindergarten, the school may conduct a series of assessments during the first semester for specific purposes. Elementary magnet schools or magnet programs may require, as a condition of admission, that the parent/legal guardian sign contracts or magnet agreements requiring the parent/legal guardian and/or student to participate in school activities or after-school activities or mandating the student to wear uniforms, where such requirements are part of the magnet theme.

- (ii) Middle School Level: In addition to any of the above magnet requirements that would be specific to an elementary magnet school or magnet program, at the middle school level, the student's schedule must be able to accommodate the required magnet classes, core classes, and elective classes. In addition, the applicant must be eligible for the grade level for which the applicant is applying.
 - (iii) High School Level: In addition to any of the above magnet requirements specified above for elementary or middle school, at the high school level, the student's schedule must be able to accommodate the required magnet classes, core classes, and academic classes. In addition, the applicant must be eligible for the grade level for which the applicant is applying.
 - (iv) Prior to the first day of school of each year, a principal may submit any such new requirements to the Office of School Choice Services to be considered for the next recruitment cycle. The Superintendent or designee shall review these requirements to confirm that they are nondiscriminatory and do not impede equal access for all students.
- (5) Application, Selection, and Admission Process.
- (a) Between November 1 and February 15 of each school year, or the first school day following November 1 and February 15 if these days fall on a non-school day, the Office of School Choice Services shall make applications for magnet schools and magnet programs available online. Specific application dates shall be determined before the annual brochure publication and Magnet Fair for the next recruitment cycle.
 - (b) To be eligible for consideration for the lottery for admission to a magnet school or magnet program, a parent/legal guardian of an applicant must complete an application in the manner specified by the Office of School Choice Services between November and February. Students may select a first, second, and third choice.
 - (c) The student and parent/legal guardian of a student must reside in Orange County, Florida at the time of application, with the exception of the following:
 - (i) The student of a parent/legal guardian, who is a current OCPS employee, and who does not reside in Orange County, is eligible for consideration to enter the lottery which may result in admission to a

magnet school or magnet program. If the parent/legal guardian is no longer employed by OCPS and the student is not a resident of Orange County at the time of non-employment, the student will be withdrawn from the magnet school or magnet program at the end of the school year.

- (d) The Office of School Choice Services may determine magnet student selection by a lottery process subject to the preferences listed below. The Office of School Choice Services may assign as many eligible students to the magnet school or magnet program as can be accommodated per school/program capacity. All eligible applicants who meet the application deadline will be considered for available seats. If there are more eligible applicants requesting admission to a specific magnet school or magnet program than the number of seats available, a lottery will be utilized.
- (e) High School Eligibility, Selection, and Admission: Eligible applicants for high school programs will be considered for seat offers as follows:
 - (i) Prior to the selection process, schools shall identify the number of available seats for incoming ninth and tenth graders, which will not exceed magnet school or magnet program capacity.
 - (ii) Applicants outside of the District shall be required to establish promotion of previous grade levels.
 - (iii) If there are more eligible applicants than there are seats available, sixty percent (60%) of the available seats will be computer-assigned using a GPA academic ranking system and forty percent (40%) of the available seats will be assigned by a lottery process.
 - (iv) The GPA academic ranking criteria may encompass a total of the previous two (2) years' unweighted final GPA for each year.
 - (v) Students applying for a Visual or Performing Arts program or school must meet eligible academic requirements and meet or exceed audition requirements in order to be considered for placement.
- (f) Middle School Eligibility, Selection, and Admission: To determine application eligibility, applicants outside of the District for middle school programs must establish promotion of previous grade levels. At the time of application, an Orlando Gifted Academy applicant must be eligible as a gifted student and receiving services via an Education Plan implemented in the State of Florida pursuant to Florida law and Administrative Code rules.
- (g) Elementary School Eligibility, Selection, and Admission: Elementary school programs do not have academic requirements, but on-grade-level performance is preferred. At the time of application, an Orlando Gifted Academy applicant must be eligible as a gifted student and receiving services via an Education Plan implemented in the State of Florida pursuant to Florida law and Administrative Code rules.
- (h) Additional Applicants, Open Seats, and Lottery Information: If there are

additional eligible applicants and open seats are available in a magnet school or magnet program after the first lottery, a second lottery may be conducted to offer the available seats. Specific information regarding dates and times of lotteries, deadlines for registration, frequently asked questions, and other relevant information shall be posted on the Office of School Choice Services' website.

(6) Assignment Preferences.

Assignment preferences may be implemented in the following order:

- (a) In accordance with Florida Statutes, dependent children of active duty military personnel who otherwise meet the eligibility criteria for a magnet school or magnet program shall be given first preference for admission to the magnet school or magnet program.
- (b) The Office of School Choice Services may give a preference to the elementary siblings of older elementary students already admitted and attending an elementary magnet school or magnet program and who will be returning to the same magnet school or magnet program in the year for which application is being made. For purposes of this preference, siblings are brothers and sisters, step- brothers and step-sisters, or half-brothers and half-sisters living at the same address. To be eligible for this preference, the sibling must meet any academic or related criteria for this next level and must submit an application per the application requirements. This preference extends to Orlando Gifted Academy.
- (c) The Office of School Choice Services may give a priority consideration to students who have participated in, and completed, a program in a similar preparatory magnet theme at the previous grade level. To be eligible for this preference, a student must meet any academic or related criteria for this next level and must submit an application per the application requirements.

(7) Wait Pool and Waitlist.

- (a) Wait Pool: A wait pool will be utilized after the first lottery and before the second lottery for applicants who do not receive a seat offer in any of their magnet school or magnet program choices from the first lottery. These applicants may be entered into a second lottery for any seats that may become available when or if offered applicants decline the offer from the first lottery.
- (b) Waitlist: A waitlist will be utilized after the second lottery. Those applicants who cannot be given any of their choices will be placed on a randomized waitlist and may be offered a seat later if spaces become available before the first day of school for which application was made. Students offered a magnet seat in any of their magnet application choices will not be placed on a wait list for their other choices.

(8) Student Continuation and Exit Criteria.

- (a) As a general rule, once a student is admitted to a magnet school or magnet program, the Office of School Choice Services may allow the student to remain in that magnet school or magnet program until the student reaches the highest grade level offered, provided the student remains enrolled in the magnet school or magnet program and remains in good academic standing.
 - (b) Upon acceptance to a magnet school or magnet program, students and parents/legal guardians may be required to sign an agreement of understanding indicating certain academic, attendance, and behavioral requirements of the magnet school or magnet program. Students who fail to meet the standards set forth by the magnet school or magnet program may be placed on an appropriate probation for one grading period. The probationary form may be completed and signed by all applicable parties. If the violation is corrected during the specified time period, the probation will no longer apply. If there is insufficient improvement at the conclusion of the probation period, the student will be exited from the magnet school or magnet program and will be required to return to his/her zoned school at the end of the first semester, or the end of the school year, whichever occurs first.
 - (c) Students who wish to voluntarily exit a magnet school or magnet program after the school year is in progress may complete a request to withdraw from the magnet school or magnet program. Once exited from the magnet program or school, the student shall return to his/her zoned school.
 - (d) The Superintendent or designee may submit recommendations to the School Board for its approval concerning entrance and exit criteria for all special programs.
- (9) Students Entering OCPS from Another County, State, or Country.
- (a) Students entering Orange County Public Schools in grades K-12 who are currently or were most recently enrolled in a magnet school or magnet program in another county, state, or country can request consideration for placement in an OCPS magnet school or magnet program at any time during the school year if they meet the following requirements:
 - (i) Must submit proof that they were/are enrolled in a magnet school or magnet program during the previous and/or current school year;
 - (ii) Must provide transcripts showing courses taken and current or most recent enrollment; the courses must align or be the equivalent of the curriculum requirements for the requested magnet school or magnet program and be part of the progression plan for completing the magnet course of study; must meet the academic eligibility requirements of the requested magnet school or magnet program.
 - (iii) Students applying for a Visual or Performing Arts program or school must meet academic eligibility requirements and meet audition requirements in order to be considered for placement.
 - (b) If the above requirements are met, assignment will be made by the Office

of School Choice Services on a space available basis.

- (c) Athletic eligibility will be determined per review by the Orange County Public Schools' District Athletic Director and FHSAA rules.

(10) Process for the Creation or Replication of a Magnet School or Magnet Program.

- (a) At any time throughout the year, the Superintendent or designee may determine whether there is a need to identify any potential sites for new magnet schools or magnet programs, for replication of existing magnet themes at new sites, or for moving a magnet program from one school to another. In making this determination, the Superintendent or designee shall utilize the goals for magnet schools and magnet programs that are outlined in this policy.
- (b) The Office of School Choice Services shall establish procedures and guidelines to govern the creation of new magnet schools and magnet programs, replication of a magnet theme at a new site, or the movement of a magnet program from one school to another as it deems appropriate.
- (c) After approval by the principal's supervisor, and at any time throughout the year, a principal may submit a proposal to the Office of School Choice Services and apply for internal academy status for zoned students only. The Superintendent or designee shall review the proposal using the goals specified in this policy. Based on the review, academy status may be provisionally granted to the school by the Superintendent or designee. After a period of at least one (1) full year of progressive operation and successful onsite reviews by the Office of School Choice Services, the principal and the Associate Superintendent of School Choice Services or designee may submit a school academy final magnet proposal to be reviewed by the Superintendent or designee, which may result in a petition to the School Board who may, then, provide approval for District magnet status for the school or program.

(11) Process for Reverting, Redeveloping, or Withdrawing an Existing Magnet School or Magnet Program.

- (a) The Associate Superintendent of School Choice Services or designee may submit to the Superintendent or designee any recommendations to revert, redevelop, or withdraw a magnet school or magnet program. A recommendation to discontinue a magnet school or magnet program may be based on, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (i) The magnet school or magnet program is not contributing to the stabilization of student assignment (i.e., the magnet program is causing or has caused the school to exceed its capacity); or
 - (ii) The magnet school or magnet program is not able to be successfully implemented; or
 - (iii) The magnet school or magnet program has declining student achievement or declining student enrollment.

- (b) The principal of a magnet school or magnet program may submit to the Office of School Choice Services a request to revert, redevelop, or withdraw the magnet school or the magnet program located at a particular school site, with the approval of the principal's supervisor and Superintendent or designee. The request to discontinue a magnet school or magnet program may be based on, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (i) The magnet school or magnet program has not met or made progress toward the five (5) goals specified in this policy; or,
 - (ii) The magnet program is causing or has caused the school to exceed its capacity; or
 - (iii) The magnet school or magnet program has declining student achievement or declining student enrollment.
- (c) The Associate Superintendent of School Choice Services or designee shall submit the recommendations and/or requests to the Superintendent or designee who shall review each recommendation and/or request. The Superintendent or designee shall notify the School Board of the Superintendent's decision to revert, redevelop, or withdraw the magnet school or magnet program for the upcoming school year.
 - (i) The School Board may decide whether to revert, redevelop, or withdraw a magnet school or magnet program. Said decision may consider, but is not limited to, the factors set forth in subsection (a) or (b) above.

(12) Budget and Funding Implications.

- (a) For new magnet schools or magnet programs, including programs that the Superintendent or designee determines should be replicated, the District shall, to the extent that budgetary considerations permit, provide necessary and reasonable funding so that these schools and programs can achieve the five (5) goals outlined in this policy. The funding may include funds for necessary planning and renovation of the school so that the theme can be effectively implemented. The funding may include start-up funds from federal magnet school grants.
- (b) Generally, it is expected that the magnet school or magnet program will be fully implemented within three (3) years after the magnet is first approved and implemented. Once a magnet school or magnet program has been fully implemented, the District may provide reasonable and necessary recurring costs to the extent that budgetary considerations permit. These costs may include personnel and professional development. The Superintendent or designee shall direct the Office of School Choice Services to monitor this process.

(13) Transportation.

In general, transportation is not provided for students who are enrolled in

magnet schools and magnet programs, absent approval of specific magnet routes by School Board action.

(14) Monitoring and Evaluation.

- (a) Annually, the Office of School Choice Services shall conduct a review of magnet schools and magnet programs. This may include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (i) Data on the students who were accepted into each magnet school or magnet program, including the diversity of students accepted into each magnet school or magnet program;
 - (ii) Identification of any perceived barriers to students being eligible and admitted into magnet schools or magnet programs and recommendations for eliminating any barriers;
 - (iii) Data on how students are performing in each magnet school or magnet program, including how students from diverse backgrounds are performing;
 - (iv) Data on the withdrawal of students from each magnet school or magnet program, including the diversity of the students withdrawing from the magnet school or magnet program;
 - (v) Program development input from students and their parents/legal guardians;
 - (vi) Any recommendation for improving magnet schools or magnet programs, including access of students to magnet schools or magnet programs, and for creating, replicating, or discontinuing any magnet schools or magnet programs.
- (b) The review will be submitted to the Superintendent or designee each school year.

SPECIFIC AUTHORITY: Sections 1001.41; 1001.42; 1001.43; 1002.20; and 1003.05, Florida Statutes

ADOPTED: 12/09/2014

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