

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Date: May 28, 2002
TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**
FROM: Dr. J. Hairston, Superintendent
SUBJECT: **Magnet Schools Program Performance Report Overview**
ORIGINATOR: Christine Johns, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
RESOURCE PERSON(S): Donna Flynn, Executive Director of Assessment

INFORMATION

This report summarizes the performance of magnet schools and magnet programs in BCPS on the four goals that were established at the outset of the magnet school program:

- “To accelerate systemwide reform and innovation by introducing school choice, which should contribute to an overall improvement in student achievement for the school system over time.”
- “To expand educational options and provide choice for students based on a specialized interest.”
- “To optimize systemwide building use and to relieve overcrowding.”
- “To reduce minority isolation and to achieve voluntary school desegregation.”

This is the eighth year that the magnet schools program has been in operation. More than 12,000 students are enrolled in magnet schools or magnet programs currently.

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Attachment(s)

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During the 2000-2001 school year, the Magnet Schools Program completed its eighth year of operation. Baltimore County Public Schools applied through a competitive process and received a \$2.26 million grant the first year (1993-1994) and a \$2.2 million grant the second year (1994-1995) from the U. S. Department of Education's Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP). In 1993, the grant provided financial assistance to open magnet schools at Carver Center for Arts and Technology, and Western School of Technology and Environmental Science; and to begin magnet programs at Milford Mill Academy and Woodlawn High School Center for Pre-Engineering and Student Conducted Research in Science and Mathematics. In addition, funds for planning were provided for the Lansdowne High School Business and Finance program, Cromwell Valley Elementary Regional Magnet School of Technology, and Sudbrook Magnet Middle School. Both Carver and Western schools had been half-day vocational schools with shrinking enrollments. Cromwell and Sudbrook were closed because of lack of enrollment. Cromwell's residential population is majority isolated, and Sudbrook's residential population is minority isolated.

Three non-MSAP schools also became magnet schools during the 1993-94 school year. Kenwood High School began an International Baccalaureate program. Eastern Technical High School always functioned as a vocational magnet for the northeast area of Baltimore County. Sollers Point/Southeastern Technical Magnet School was the southeast half-day vocational school.

In 1994, \$195,000 of state funding grant for capital expenditures and matching district funds were used to open the Parkville Center for Mathematics, Science, and Computer Science. District funds were used to begin elementary magnet programs at The Chatsworth School (multi-age), Church Lane Elementary Technology School, Eastwood Center (multi-age), Lutherville Laboratory for Science, Mathematics, and Communications, and Wellwood International (French immersion), as well as to add a sports science program to Kenwood High School.

In 1995, BCPS was unsuccessful in its efforts to secure continued MSAP funding. Nevertheless, the district funded and opened eight more magnet programs. The elementary school was The Halstead Academy of Mathematics, Science, Technology, and Visual Arts. The four middle schools were Deer Park Middle Magnet School, Loch Raven Technical Academy for Environmental Sciences, Visual Arts, and Performing Arts, Parkville Center for Technology, and the Southwest Academy for Arts and Science. The three high schools were Overlea High School Academy of Finance, Patapsco High School and Center for the Arts, and Towson High School Law and Public Policy Program.

During the 1997-98 school year, a bio-medical and mass communications program began at Randallstown High School. In August of 1998, an environmental magnet began at Sparrows Point High School. Magnet programs in both schools were supported by district funds.

In the spring of 1995, external consultants met and heard from eleven focus groups that included students, parents, guidance counselors, school-based personnel; the Strategic Planning Steering Committee; members of the Board of Education; and numerous staff in administration. The external consultants drafted the *Strategic Plan for the Magnet Schools Program in Baltimore County, Maryland*. The Report produced four specific goals: (1) to accelerate

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systemwide reform and innovation by introducing school choice which should contribute to an overall improvement in student achievement for the school system over the long term; (2) to expand educational options and provide choice for students based on a specialized interest; (3) to optimize systemwide building use and to relieve overcrowding; and (4) to reduce minority isolation and to achieve voluntary school desegregation.

Magnet schools program performance was assessed using the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) state standards. Standards are derived from two data-based areas: student participation and assessed student knowledge. Student participation includes two measures: attendance rate and dropout rate. The attendance rate is the percentage of students present in school for at least half the average school day during the school year. The dropout rate is the percentage of students in grades 9-12 who withdrew from school before graduation or before completing a Maryland- approved education program during the July-to-June academic year.

Assessed student knowledge includes the Maryland Functional Tests (MFT), and the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). The MFT are basic competency tests in reading, mathematics, and writing which are required in order to graduate from a Maryland high school. MFT results are reported at the end of grades 9 and 11. MSPAP require students to apply knowledge across the subject areas of reading, writing, language usage, mathematics, science, and social studies in grades 3, 5, and 8. Students must develop written responses, solve multi-step mathematics problems, conduct science investigations, and demonstrate their understanding of social studies concepts by working independently or in groups.

Standards are measures of performance against which yearly results are compared. Maryland standards are divided into three areas: *Excellent* is highly challenging and exemplary level of achievement indicating outstanding accomplishment in meeting the needs of students; *Satisfactory* is a realistic and rigorous level of achievement indicating proficiency in meeting the needs of students; and *Not Met* is a level of achievement indicating that more work is needed to attain proficiency in meeting the needs of students. Comparisons with the state standards are made for students in the state (MD), district (BCPS), and the magnet school program.

Performance is reported as percentage of students passing. Standards that have been set for the student performance data areas are:

State Data-Based Areas	Standards	
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>
Functional Tests		
Grade 9 Status of:		
· Maryland Functional Reading Test	97%	95%
· Maryland Functional Mathematics Test	90%	80%
· Maryland Functional Writing Test	96%	90%

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State Data-Based Areas	Standards	
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>
Functional Tests		
Grade 11 Status of:		
· Maryland Functional Reading Test	99%	97%
· Maryland Functional Mathematics Test	99%	97%
· Maryland Functional Writing Test	99%	97%
· All Tests	96%	90%
Attendance Rate (yearly)		
· Grades 1-12	96%	94%
Dropout Rate - (yearly)		
· Grades 9-12	1.25%	3.00%
MSPAP		
· Grades 3, 5, 8	25%	70%

To determine if the magnet schools program is contributing to the reduction of minority isolation and to the achievement of voluntary school desegregation in BCPS, comparisons are made with the September 30 BCPS Enrollment Reports. MSAP magnet school/programs have specific MSAP goals and the non-MSAP magnets have the goal of reducing minority isolation by moving toward the district's minority percentage. The objective is to reduce the differences among schools' minority enrollment.

Goal 1: To accelerate systemwide reform and innovation by introducing school choice, which should contribute to an overall improvement in student achievement for the school system over time;

To determine if the Magnet Schools Program accelerated systemwide reform and innovation by introducing school choice which should contribute to an overall improvement in student achievement for the school system, comparisons were made with all Maryland, Baltimore County, and magnet students on the Maryland School Performance (MSPP) indicators. The MSPP compares school achievement in various data-based areas to state standards. Magnet students include all students enrolled in magnet schools/programs and who completed the 2000-01 school year. Magnet school withdrawal rates include those students who completed the 1999-00 school year but who did not return to complete magnet schools/programs during 2000-01 school year.

Overall, student achievement of students in magnet programs met or exceeded the average Baltimore County student achievement on most indicators. An analysis of relevant data-based areas reveal that:

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- Magnet students as a group met or exceeded twelve of the thirty MSPP standards, while BCPS students met or exceeded ten state standards. Maryland students only met or exceeded eight state standards. *See Summary of Maryland School Performance Report Standards.*
- Magnet students as a group met the satisfactory state standard for attendance at the middle and high students, and the excellent state standard at the elementary students. BCPS students met the state satisfactory standard for elementary and middle students, as did Maryland students. *See Summary of Maryland School Performance Report Standards.*
- Magnet students as a group achieved the excellent state standard for drop-outs. BCPS students met the satisfactory standard, while Maryland students did not meet the state standard for drop-outs. *See Summary of Maryland School Performance Report Standards.*
- Magnet students as a group achieved all excellent standards on the Maryland Functional Tests, BCPS students met or exceeded all state standards (Excellent - 4, Satisfactory - 3). Maryland students only met or exceeded all but one standard. *See Summary of Maryland School Performance Report Standards.*
- Magnet students achieved the excellent standard in science on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) in grade 8. Neither Baltimore County nor Maryland students met any of the state standards. *See Summary of Maryland School Performance Report Standards.*
- Magnet students as a group have median percentiles which are above the national norms (50th percentile) in grades 2, 4, and 6 in reading, language total, and mathematics total on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS/5). Their median percentiles are higher than Baltimore County students and Maryland students in reading, language total, and mathematics total in those grades. *See All Students/Magnet Students Data-Based Areas.*
- Magnet students as a group have a mean score of 508 on the verbal SAT as does Maryland students and as compared to Baltimore County (506). Magnet students as a group have a mean score of 506 on the math SAT as compared to Baltimore County students (515) and Maryland students (510).

Goal 2: To expand educational options and provide choice for students based on a specialized interest;

- Twelve thousand fifty-seven (12,057) students completed the 2000-01 school year in a magnet school/program. *See All Students/Magnet Students Data-Based Areas.* Of those who completed the school year, 3,122 were new entrants to the magnet program.

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- Most students, once enrolled, remained in a magnet program. Only 9.7% of magnet students withdrew from a magnet program countywide. *See All Students/Magnet Students Data-Based Areas.* The most common reason reported for student withdrawal was school transfers: U.S. public (n=152), Baltimore County non-public (n=89), MD non-public (n=63), and U.S. non-public (n=59).
- Magnet schools enrolled students receiving special services. *See All Students/Magnet Students Data-Based Areas.* The percentage of magnet students who received special services included limited English proficient (1.3%); special education (6.3%); free and reduced lunch (17.6%); and gifted and talented (29.2%). The percentage of Baltimore County students who received the same special services during the 2000-01 school year were as follows: limited English proficient (1.7%); special education (11.7%); free and reduced lunch (26.9%); and gifted and talented (14.3%).

Individual magnet schools/program data have been collected which support the expansion of educational options by Baltimore County students through the magnet program. *See Student Population, Performance, and Supporting Information.*

Goal 3: To optimize systemwide building use and to relieve overcrowding;

To determine if building use was optimized and overcrowding was relieved for some schools, data on magnet students' home schools were collected for the 2000-01 school year. *See Home Schools of Magnet Schools for the 2000-2001 school year.*

- Magnet schools/programs served 12,496 students from home schools in the five areas of Baltimore County. Area breakdowns are as follows: Northwest - 3,479, Central - 2,652, Northeast - 2,608, Southwest - 1,956, and Southeast - 1,801. *See Magnet Students' Home Schools.*

Goal 4: To reduce minority isolation and to achieve voluntary school desegregation;

To determine if the Magnet Schools Program reduced minority isolation and achieved voluntary school desegregation, minority student enrollment has been tracked since the beginning of the program. Schools which were recipients of the federal grant have very specific goals which vary according to their starting points and the need to reduce minority isolation in students' home schools. All other magnet schools are working toward the school system average for their minority population.

- Four of the six schools which were recipients of the MSAP grant achieved their desegregation goals during the 1993-1995, 2-year cycle. The other two original grant recipients became more racially isolated. *See Percent of Minority Students Enrolled in Schools with Magnet Programs.*
- The remaining 18 schools are working toward the school system average of minority students (38.3%) for the 2000-01 school year. During 2000-01, 11 magnet programs/schools moved in the direction of the school system percentage of minority students.

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According to the 2000 Census data, Baltimore County's African-American population grew by more than 77 percent, or 66,000 since 1990. Nearly, 27,000 whites moved from Baltimore County. The gains are most visible in the census tracts in the Woodlawn and Randallstown areas. Older families are leaving while younger families with children are moving into Baltimore County.