

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Date: September 25, 2001

TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

FROM: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Rule 6130 – Instruction: Magnet Schools and Programs,
Magnet Schools Admission

ORIGINATOR: Christine Johns, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

RESOURCE PERSON(S) Phyllis Bailey, Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12
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Magnet Programs
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INFORMATION

The Magnet Policy was approved by the Board of Education on April 20, 1999 (Appendix I) and concurrently a Superintendent's Rule was developed. The intent of the policy and accompanying rule was to establish a systemwide mission and procedures for the diverse magnet school programs.

Appendix II contains revisions to the Superintendent's Rule 6130 to reflect the current organizational structure and the positions to be involved in the appeal process regarding Magnet Schools Admissions. The key element of the revision is a change from a four-part appeal process to a three-part process, eliminating the role of the Area Office. The procedure established for the revised appeal process is that the initial appeal will be made to the Executive Director of Special Programs, PreK-12, and if necessary, to the Superintendent, and finally to the Board of Education. The revised procedures are aligned with the recently revised Rule 5140, Students: Enrollment and Attendance.

Appendix I – Policy 6130– Instruction: Magnet Schools and Programs

Appendix II – Superintendent's Rule 6130 – Instruction: Magnet Schools and Programs,
Magnet Schools Admissions

Appendix I

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INSTRUCTION

Magnet Schools and Programs

The Board of Education of Baltimore County is committed to providing quality educational opportunities for all students, regardless of background, by providing each student an educational environment that enhances that student's educational success. The Board of Education is also committed to encouraging all parents to play active roles in their children's education and to increasing the educational choices available to parents and students in the public schools.

The Board supports magnet schools and programs as one tool for achieving these goals. First, the Board of Education believes that magnet schools and programs should promote educational excellence and offer to students with different interests, talents, and aptitudes, distinct choices that may enhance their educational success. The Board of Education also believes that magnet schools and programs should be used to develop innovative instructional practices and promote systemic reform. Lastly, magnet schools and programs are a tool for the promotion of diversity within schools. As defined by the Board of Education, diversity includes racial, ethnic, economic, gender, and special needs populations.

Legal References: **Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §4-109**

**Policy
Adopted: 4/20/99**

**Board of Education
of Baltimore County**

Appendix II
6130**INSTRUCTION: Magnet Schools and Programs****Magnet Schools Admission****1. Definition of Magnet Schools and Magnet Programs**

As used in this rule, magnet schools and programs are defined as those schools and programs with a specialized curriculum or those with an emphasis on instruction that is different from that generally offered in other schools throughout the school system. Magnet schools and programs can be total-school or school-within-a-school programs.

2. Access to Magnet Schools and Programs

- a. To promote equal educational opportunities for all students, it is the goal of the school system to provide all interested students with a fair opportunity for access to magnet schools and programs. To carry out this goal, the Superintendent directs central office staff to assist each magnet school and program in developing equitable recruitment strategies and to recruit a pool of applicants which reflects the diversity of the school system as a whole.
- b. At the elementary level, the school system shall not employ any academic or other admissions criteria for determining whether a student is eligible for a magnet school or program. For magnet secondary schools and programs that have academic or other admissions criteria, each year the Superintendent or superintendent's designee shall review and approve those criteria to determine that they are educational related to the specialized curriculum or instructional strategy.
- c. Where school-within-a-school magnet programs exist, the principal shall promote interaction, for as much of the school day as possible, between those students participating in the magnet program and those students who do not. Students residing in the attendance area of a school housing a magnet program also may apply for admission to the program under the procedures set forth in subsection 4 of this rule.

3. Transportation

- a. The school system shall provide transportation to students who reside in the attendance area of a magnet school or program in accordance with the standards established by the Department of Transportation, as set forth in Board of Education Policy 3410.
- b. Transportation to secondary school magnet schools and programs will be provided from community pick-up points located in each of the five geographic areas.

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4. Admissions

- a. **The Superintendent or the superintendent's designee, together with a representative of each magnet school and program, annually shall designate the number of available seats by grade for each magnet school or program for the following school year.**
- b. **Each year, the Superintendent or superintendent's designee shall assess the extent to which each magnet school program's enrollment reflects the diversity of the school system as a whole. Based on this analysis, the Superintendent or designee may set recruitment goals for groups that are underrepresented in magnet schools or programs. "Recruitment" may include efforts such as targeted mailings, but shall not create any priority or preference for admission.**
- c. **The Superintendent or superintendent's designee shall make magnet applications and brochures available at all schools and at the central office. Magnet applications and brochures will be distributed to the parents of students currently attending kindergarten and the fifth and eighth grades in the Baltimore County Public Schools.**
- d. **Students who wish to apply to a magnet school or program outside of their attendance area must apply for a special permission transfer in accordance with the procedures set forth in Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5140. Students must complete the "Application for Special Transfer" form and attach it to the completed magnet school or program application. The magnet school principal will approve the special permission transfer in accordance with the procedures set forth in Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5140. Special permission transfer students are required to qualify for magnet schools or programs according to the approved program criteria and will be selected according to the procedures set forth in 4e and 4f of Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 6130. Parents/GUARDIANS are responsible for providing transportation to and from the special permission magnet school or program.**

When the special permission student completes the terminal grade of a magnet school or program, the student will attend the subsequent middle or high school serving his/her area of residence, unless the student is accepted in a magnet school or program outside of the student's attendance area.

e. Elementary Schools and Programs

- (1) **All students otherwise eligible to attend the elementary grades of the Baltimore County Public Schools shall be eligible to apply for elementary magnet schools and programs within their targeted attendance areas.**

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- (2) **Siblings:** Kindergarten applicants applying to elementary magnet schools and programs who have a sibling who is attending the magnet school and who will continue to attend that school the next year will be placed in the magnet school and program. The applicant must apply within the regular application period in order to receive sibling priority for placement. For purposes of this rule, a sibling shall be defined as a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or foster child living in the same household.
- (3) All elementary school applications must be forwarded to the central office, where the Superintendent or superintendent's designee will conduct a centralized random lottery to determine student enrollment.
- (4) If there are fewer qualified applications than seats available for any elementary magnet school program, the school system shall admit all eligible students to fill the available seats. If there are more applications than seats available for an elementary magnet school and program, the school system will apply the kindergarten sibling priority process. This is followed by the random lottery selection process.
- (5) After the lottery selection process, the school system will inform magnet schools and programs of the students selected so these students may be notified by the schools. Students offered a seat will inform a magnet school or program by the designated deadline whether the seat will be accepted.

f. **Secondary Schools/Programs**

- (1) All students interested in applying for a secondary magnet school and program must complete a written application and submit it to the appropriate magnet school between designated dates from October to mid-[January] DECEMBER. A student may apply to programs in up to three magnet schools within the student's magnet attendance area or by special permission transfer.
- (2) All applications for secondary magnet schools and programs will be reviewed at the school for which admission is sought to determine the eligibility of each applicant under any criteria approved in 2b. Each secondary school will notify applicants who are not eligible for that magnet school and program.
- (3) If there are fewer applicants than seats available for any secondary magnet school and program, the school shall admit all qualified students to fill the available seats. If there are more applicants than seats available for a secondary magnet school and program, the local school, using criteria appropriate to the specific magnet program, will screen applicants to

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determine the number of qualified candidates. Where recruitment goals for under represented groups have been established, the pool will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the goals have been reached. The list of qualified applicants will be forwarded to the central office where a random lottery will be conducted to select students to fill the available seats.

- (4) At the middle school level where the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of available seats, up to 10% of the seats may first be filled with candidates who show exceptional commitment and promise in the specialized program as evidenced by their performance on the approved entrance criteria. The remaining seats will be filled using the centralized random lottery selection process from the remaining pool of qualified applicants.
- (5) At the high school level where the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of available seats, up to 20% of the seats may first be filled with candidates who show exceptional commitment and promise in the specialized program as evidenced by their performance on the approved entrance criteria. The remaining seats will be filled using the centralized random lottery selection process from the remaining pool of qualified applicants.
- (6) After the lottery selection process, the school system will inform magnet schools and programs of the students selected so these students may be notified by the schools. Students offered seats shall inform the magnet school and program by the designated deadline if the seat will be accepted.

5. Waiting Lists

- a. A waiting list will be generated randomly for each oversubscribed magnet school and program. The waiting list will be maintained until the second semester of that school year.
- b. After an annually designated date in March, qualified students who are new to the system and who have not previously applied may apply or be added to a waiting lists or lists.
- c. Elementary and secondary students on waiting lists who are offered assignments to a magnet school or program must accept the assignment within the specified time or apply for the next annual selection process.

6. Withdrawals

- a. **Students admitted to the magnet schools and programs ACCORDING TO THE PROCEDURES IN SECTION 4A - F OF THIS RULE may remain in these schools and programs as long as their parents are residents of [the school system] BALTIMORE COUNTY, and the student has not been withdrawn to attend another school, public or private. If a family moves out of the attendance area of the magnet school or program, transportation will not be provided.**
- b. **Any request for temporary leave from a magnet school or program must be approved, in advance of such leave of absence, by the principal of the school. A leave of absence from the magnet school and program shall be considered in the following situations:**
- (1) **If a family is moving out of Baltimore County temporarily, a leave of absence may be granted for a maximum of one (1) year.**
 - (2) **A student also may be granted a leave of absence from the magnet school and program for the period of time necessary to complete any of the following: a stay as a patient in a hospital for an extended period of time; acceptance into a board approved alternative education program or another exceptional education program; or enrollment in a licensed full-time substance abuse treatment program.**
- c. **Students who violate the provisions of Board of Education Policy 5550, *Disruptive Behavior*, or Board of Education Policy 5540, *Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs*, shall be suspended and expelled in accordance with applicable Board of Education policies and Superintendent's rules. When students who have been expelled are ready to return to their program of study, they may return to the magnet school and program from which they were expelled.**
- d. **Students in danger of failing in their prime areas of study at mid-year will be informed of their status. Counseling regarding the propriety of a student's continuation in magnet schools and programs will take place at the end of the school year.**

Any decision by the administration to withdraw a student from a magnet school or program because of academic failure must be approved by the [area superintendent] EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PREK-12 SPECIAL PROGRAMS OR DESIGNEE. The administration of the magnet school or program shall explain the basis of the withdrawal to the student's parents/guardians.

A student who transfers out of a magnet program housed in a comprehensive school will be transferred to the student's home school.

- e. **Parents/GUARDIANS may remove students from magnet schools and programs and return them to their home schools. Principals of the students' home schools shall not deny admission to such students.**

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7. Appeals

- a. **Denials of admission to magnet schools MAY BE APPEALED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN AND MUST [first] be [appealed] MADE in writing to the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PREK-12 SPECIAL PROGRAMS within ten (10) calendar days from the date of the school's denial letter OR THE POSTMARKED DATE, WHICHEVER IS LATER. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PREK-12 SPECIAL PROGRAMS OR DESIGNEE WILL RESEARCH AND EVALUATE THE APPEAL AND ISSUE A WRITTEN DECISION.**
- b. **[If the denial is upheld, the next level of appeal must be submitted, in writing, to the appropriate area superintendent within ten (10) calendar days from the date of the denial letter from the Office of Gifted and Talented Education and Magnet Programs. The area superintendent or designee will issue a written opinion.]**

IF THE APPEAL IS DENIED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PREK-12 SPECIAL PROGRAMS OR DESIGNEE, THE WRITTEN DECISION WILL INFORM THE PARENT (S)/GUARDIAN(S) OF THE RIGHT TO APPEAL, IN WRITING, TO THE SUPERINTENDENT WITHIN FIFTEEN (15) CALENDAR DAYS OF THE DATE OF THE DENIAL LETTER OR THE POSTMARKED DATE, WHICHEVER IS LATER.

- c. **[If the denial is upheld at the area superintendent's level, the parent may appeal in writing to the Superintendent, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the date of the area superintendent's decision. The Superintendent's decision may then be appealed to the Board of Education within thirty (30) calendar days of the denial letter pursuant to Section 4-205 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and Board of Education Policy 8339.]**

DENIALS OF MAGNET ADMISSIONS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PREK-12 SPECIAL PROGRAMS OR DESIGNEE MUST BE APPEALED IN WRITING TO THE SUPERINTENDENT WITHIN FIFTEEN (15) CALENDAR DAYS OF THE DATE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PREK-12 SPECIAL PROGRAMS' OR DESIGNEE'S DENIAL LETTER OR THE POSTMARKED DATE, WHICHEVER IS LATER. THE SUPERINTENDENT OR DESIGNEE WILL RESEARCH AND EVALUATE THE APPEAL AND ISSUE A WRITTEN DECISION.

- D. **IF THE APPEAL IS DENIED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OR DESIGNEE, THE WRITTEN DECISION WILL INFORM THE PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) OF THE RIGHT TO APPEAL IN WRITING TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION WITHIN (THIRTY) 30 CALENDAR DAYS OF THE DATE OF THE DENIAL LETTER IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 4-205 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND AND BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 8339, INTERNAL BOARD POLICIES: OPERATIONS, APPEAL BEFORE HEARING EXAMINER. AN APPEAL WILL BE CONSIDERED TIMELY FILED, IF, WITHIN THE ALLOTTED TIME PERIOD, IT HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, POSTMARKED, OR DEPOSITED IN THE U.S. MAIL AS REGISTERED OR CERTIFIED MAIL.**

Legal references: Annotated Code of Maryland
Education Article, §4-205

Rule
adopted: 4/20/99
revised: 1/23/01

Superintendent of Schools