

6Gx53-4.017 MAGNET SCHOOLS:

A distinctive theme and/or other program feature characterize Magnet schools. Magnet schools are schools of choice that provide the standard required curriculum of general education to students while using special learning themes, such as science and technology. These themes serve to attract students from other schools.

I. Purpose: The magnet schools in Polk County serve as a tool to voluntarily desegregate schools in targeted communities. Through controlled admission procedures, pre-determined capacities are maintained. The result is a site-specific educational program that enhances the educational experiences of children while providing a multicultural environment and a special focus.

II. Admission Procedures: The admission procedures for magnet schools are governed by the Order entered by the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division, on July 8, 1992 in the case of Herman Henry Mills, et al. vs. The School Board of Polk County, Florida, et al., Case Number 63-150 CIV-T-H, which incorporated a proposed order (commonly called "the consent decree" or "consent order") dated June 5, 1992, and shall include the following directives:

A. Applications will be accepted during three prescribed application periods each year. These periods will run for the duration of four weeks each. The first application period of each year shall be called the open enrollment period. All applications received during the first week of this application period are considered to be the same date for the purposes of establishing priority. If more students apply during this period than seats are available, a computer will assign a number for each student by grade to execute a random sort. This week is referred to as the lottery week and will occur once annually. Students who apply after the first week of the open enrollment period will be assigned a number based on postmark of application. The second application period shall be considered the summer application period and the third application period considered the fall application period. These application periods will be executed in the same manner as the open enrollment period with the exception of the lottery week. No hand deliveries will be accepted since each application must be submitted electronically.

B. A waiting list for each school will be maintained through the Office of Magnet, Choice and Charter Schools. Students will be notified when a vacancy occurs at their grade in the order of the waiting list number assigned to them. If a student is not selected for entry into a magnet program in the year for which he/she has applied, his or her priority status may be maintained for the following year. Applicants may request to have their name removed from the waiting list.

C. Students applying for more than one school will be placed into the school of first opportunity and the status on a waiting list for any other magnet and/or choice school will be canceled. Applicants should be prepared to accept placement into any school for which they have applied; however, they will have the opportunity to make a decision at the same time of the opening. Failure to accept at the time of the opening will result in removal from the waiting list.

D. All magnet schools are "zoned" to serve targeted communities. Attendance or enrollment in a magnet school is based upon designated attendance areas or neighborhood areas. Applicants must be able to provide proof of residence within the zone of applications. Magnet schools are zoned to serve communities as follows:

1. Lawton Chiles Middle Academy (6-8), Lincoln Academy (K-5) and Rochelle School of the Arts (K-8) will serve the areas bound by the five Lakeland high schools; Kathleen, Lake Gibson, Lakeland High, George Jenkins and Tenoroc.
2. Bartow Elementary Academy (K-5) and Union Academy (6-8) will serve the communities feeding into the secondary schools of Bartow, Lake Wales, Frostproof, Fort Meade and Mulberry.
3. Brigham Academy (K-5) and Jewett Middle Academy (6-8) will serve the communities feeding into the secondary schools of Auburndale, Winter Haven, Tenoroc, and Lake Region. Jewett Middle Academy may serve the students from the Haines City attendance area on a "space available" basis.
4. Bethune Academy (K-5) will serve the communities feeding into the secondary schools of Ridge Community and Haines City.

Students enrolled in a magnet school, who move outside of the zoned area for the magnet after October 1, may continue in that school for the balance of the school year; however, transportation will be the responsibility of the parent. Magnet students who move from one zone to another must reapply for the appropriate magnet school in the new zone. Priority from one zone does not carry into the new magnet zone.

E. Students who are enrolled in the elementary magnet schools and are eligible for promotion will move automatically into the related zoned middle school magnet as listed below. For the purpose of student enrollment, these schools are treated as a single site.

1. Lincoln Academy into Lawton Chiles Middle Academy.

2. Bartow Elementary Academy into Union Academy Middle.
3. Brigham Academy into Jewett Middle Academy.
4. Bethune Academy into Jenkins Academy of Technology.

F. All students who make application for a magnet school are given a priority number for the grade and school of application. This number only applies for that grade, and school. If a student is retained in a grade, there is no status for that child other than that which was established during the application process. Each student is offered a seat in a specific grade of application and not to the school in general. Therefore, students who are retained do not have access in the grade of retention and must reapply to be eligible in that grade.

G. Kindergarten applicants with siblings enrolled during Open Enrollment in January in the magnet school of application who will be returning to that site for the upcoming school year will receive guaranteed admission within the same school to permit families to remain together in the same school facility. The application for the incoming kindergartner must be made during Open Enrollment in January.

H. Children of employees at a magnet school shall be considered for admission into that magnet school.

I. While there are no admission requirements into the magnet school, individual school sites may require parents and/or students to sign contracts of commitment and expectation.

III. Annual Review: The Office of Magnet, Choice and Charter Schools shall review the Operating Guidelines and Admission Procedures on an annual basis and propose revisions as necessary for approval by the School Board.

IV. Staff Selection: Selection of magnet school administrators and staff shall be in accordance with School Board policy.

V. Student Transportation: Transportation shall be provided for magnet school students on the same basis as that provided for students in non-magnet schools in the District.

VI. Zone Modification: The School Board reserves the right to make adjustments or modifications in the magnet school zones.

Statutory Authority: Florida Statutes 1002.32, 1001.41, 1001.42, and 1001.43

The School Board of Polk County, Florida
Policy 4.017

Laws Implemented: Florida Statue 1002.31; Mills, et al. vs. The School Board of Polk County, Florida; and Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District.

Adopted: September 12, 1995

Amended:

April 22, 2003

September 27, 2005

January 9, 2007

April 22, 2008