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In March 2024, a team of magnet experts from the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership (NIMSL), a leadership development platform and technical assistance arm of Magnet Schools of America (MSA), conducted site visits at 59 magnet schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

MSA utilized the Five Pillars and Ten Standards of Magnet School Excellence – essential attributes of successful magnet schools, officially adopted to assist magnet schools and districts as they strive to promote best practices for diversity, equity, access and academic excellence.

These components were used to determine if schools were attracting students and promoting achievement and diversity.

A report was prepared by Magnet Schools of America that measured each of the magnet schools against the Five Pillars and Ten Standards of Magnet School Excellence.



The overall findings and recommendations in this document are the discoveries and solutions provided to CMS School Choice by the team of magnet experts from the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership (NIMSL), a leadership development platform and technical assistance arm of Magnet Schools of America (MSA), at the conclusion of their program review of magnet schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

Those findings and recommendations were then reviewed and synthesized by the CMS School Choice team into a set of actionable solutions and next steps that can be achieved immediately (during the current lottery season), in the short term (between the current and next lottery seasons), and in the future (lottery season in 3 years).

Timeline...

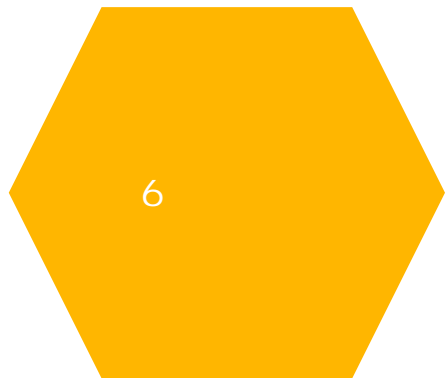
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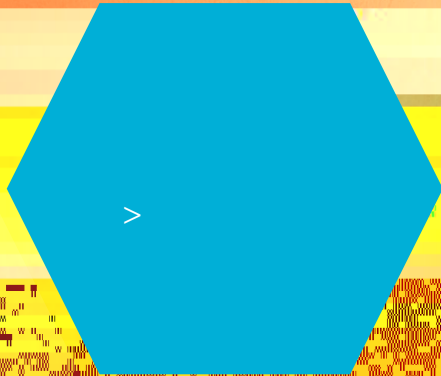


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6 is a cornerstone that offers students a global educational experience, which includes equity and access for every child creating a foundation for successful magnet schools. Through marketing, recruitment strategies and a balanced selection process, schools strive to generate student populations that are reflective of their communities. School choice provides educational environments that model empathy, respect, and collaboration and inclusion of all cultures.

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f / 3/4 6 is developed to assure theme-based curriculum is supported by appropriate pedagogy. Effective teaching strategies, emulating from best practices, are implemented through the inclusion of the school's theme. Curriculum is based on high-quality rigorous standards that prepare students for higher education and career success.



> is demonstrated through a commitment to multidimensional instruction focused on the learner's needs. Multiple assessment strategies are employed to monitor student learning, progress, and success. High expectations are clearly articulated and personalized supports are in place to address the interests and aspirations of all students.

at the school and district level is



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W / 3/4 are mutually beneficial, offer a system of support, shared ownership and a caring spirit and are designed to enhance a theme integrated educational environment. Partnerships with parents are essential for a rich educational experience for students. Community partnerships include a diverse array of stakeholders including business, health and human services and policymakers to support the education of all students. As our magnet school experts reviewed the data and toured the school campuses, they looked for indicators that Charlotte-Mecklenburg magnet schools incorporated each of these Pillars.

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Weeks of March 4-8 and March 11-15, 2024

14 highly trained magnet professionals from Florida, South Carolina, California, Nevada, Oregon, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Louisiana.

Standards folders with artifacts based on the MSA Pillars and Standards of Magnet School Excellence were asked to be completed by each school prior to the visit and reviewed by MSA to fine tune questions for the site visits based on school needs.

The team members visited each school campus highly engaged with questions based on the Five Pillars and Standards of Magnet School Excellence and the protocols including a leadership interview, a walk-through, an intensive discussion based on each standard, a student focus group and a community focus group.

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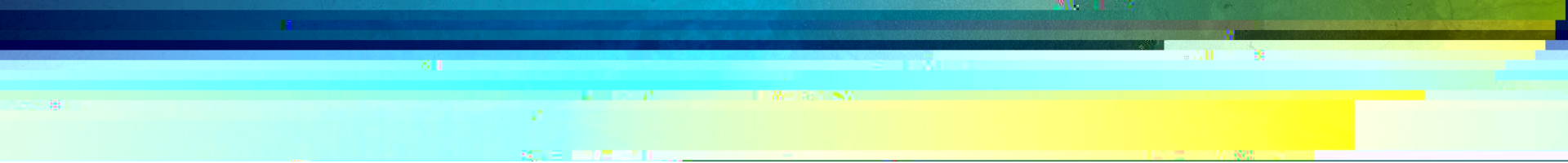
The findings in this report are provided to serve as a tool for the cycle of continuous improvement and not as a measure of quality in and of itself. This data should provide the district and schools a unique capacity to identify and leverage their strengths and opportunities for improvement to significantly impact the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District's magnet school program options and ultimately impact student college and career readiness.

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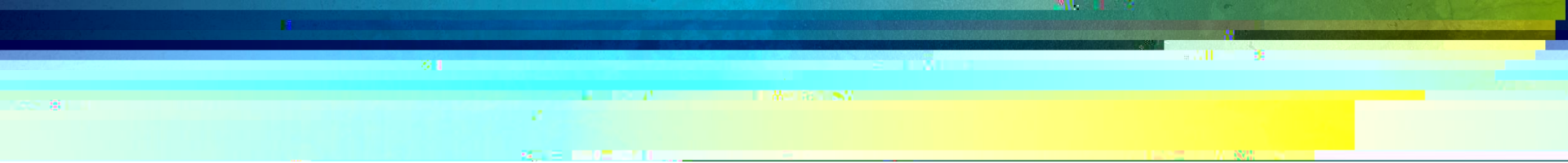
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For the question "How important were the following sources of information in your initial selection of particular schools of choice to visit?" the highest response rate was "School tours and/or virtual and in person school events" with a total of 5,256 responses followed by "Transportation Services/Level" at 4,410 responses.



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Changes in start and end times of some magnet schools, and the shift to express stops for all high schools, created enough of a burden that some schools lost students and staff due to the increased traffic and the need for afternoon/early evening religious and extracurricular activities. Although express bussing has presented challenges at other schools, it has made West Charlotte High School somewhat more attractive to families because of the school's closer proximity to the city center in contrast to other IB magnet high schools.

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Consider targeting under-enrolled magnet high schools for increased levels of transportation to improve enrollment and diversity.

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More accessible placement on the CMS website
Make lottery platform updates that help make the process easier

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Continue to offer marketing workshops and add practices for stimulating diversity.

Consult with a marketing firm to evaluate and further our strategies

Take a deeper dive into the comprehensive review to understand county-wide program distribution to evaluate who attends and who they served. (dot maps, elementary feeder patterns)

Creating strategic support plan for programs to ensure they meet an established standard of excellence for theme based learning

Target under-enrolled magnet high schools (Hawthorne), for increased levels of transportation to improve enrollment and diversity.

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Work on regulations to adjust the SES formulas based on school's needs

Work to acquire a new, more user friendly platform to accommodate parents

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The schools overall do not “scream the theme” from the street or entrance to the magnet schools.

Prominently display magnet schools’ themes on school websites, in front of school buildings and street signage

Magnet theme curriculum fidelity varied widely by like-themed schools.

Further develop the School Choice Standards of excellence for CMS Choice Themes

Some elementary and middle schools consider themselves “partial magnets” even though the

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While the district supports IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) schools, including all students in the MYP program regardless of their magnet status, only magnet students are part of the program at many MYP schools and not the whole school. This is a missed opportunity to create a school wide cohesive philosophy, enrich instruction, improve learning outcomes, etc. Increasing access to the Middle Years Programme (MYP) would increase access to the Diploma Programme (DP) and Career Programme (CP) in high school.

Expand MYP across middle and high school MYPs for school wide implementation and not just for magnet students.

While the district seems to be increasing their number of IB programs, there is not robust district support for IB training - a necessary component of being an IB school. In some cases, families are fundraising for this training which is not a sustainable or scalable funding source

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Parents are confused how CTE Academies operate versus magnet programs and which programs should be applied for through the lottery and which programs are only accessible at a certain high school.

While there was excellent teaching and learning observed on some site visits, the Learning Immersion/Talent Development theme lacks a clear focus on innovation and primarily emphasizes best practices for learning. This lack of a distinct focus may pose challenges in articulating the theme effectively to attract students to the school to increase diversity.

Review magnet themes for uniqueness and attraction versus what should be part of all students' core experience. As part of that process, research what non-magnet schools in the district are doing so that magnet themes are unique from what non-magnet schools are offering.

Identify exemplary models of other magnet programs across the country to compare notes with and learn from and to ensure magnet schools are relevant and continually improving.

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Examine MYP implementation to determine how students are engaged in the program (lottery vs homeschool)
Move forward with prospective candidate with IB experience
Attain appropriate budget for IB training and implementation

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Develop a branding strategy for our schools facilities
Creating strategic support plan for programs to ensure they meet an established standard of excellence for theme based learning
Clearly establish the vision for magnet programming in Middle schools
Reenergize the development of LI/TD to truly distinguish the program
Potentially have a dedicated CTE liaison for magnet programs
Create professional learning institutes for theme alike schools to learn

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Sometimes more than e-based training is added for schools without helping the schools make the connections between the district-mandated curriculum and the theme-based curriculum. In the community survey, 65% of respondents answered "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that CMS

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In the publicly shared district strategic plan, there is an opening statement supporting magnet schools as an opportunity to nurture student talent and interest; however, the district strategic plan does not specifically address magnet schools in goals and action steps.

Include the operation of magnet schools in the district's strategic plan and outline goals, objectives and action steps specific to magnet schools in creating socioeconomic diversity.
Develop a strategic process for magnetizing, demagnetizing and determining the location and magnet theme of magnet schools to increase socioeconomic diversity.

Compared to other districts with successful and sustainable magnet schools, the CMS magnet office is understaffed to serve the number of magnet programs, magnet school leaders and magnet students needing support with magnet theme integration, magnet theme professional development, and marketing and recruiting.

Provide additional funding for magnet district personnel positions to support magnet school themes, professional development, recruitment and marketing.

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The district has not developed and implemented a viable and sustainable financial plan for the magnet programs. Currently, the district office does not have sufficient resources to provide leadership or training for magnet schools. Although schools did not mention magnet schools being part of the district strategic plan, the overall feeling was that CMS values its

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There is inconsistency and a lack of transparency around some magnet schools having magnet coordinators to assist in the implementation, marketing and recruiting. While some principals were creative in finding ways to fund this position, it was a challenge. Schools with these positions were much further ahead in their implementation.

Provide district financial resources for a dedicated magnet coordinator position at each school to oversee the integration, marketing and recruiting.

Principals are not specifically chosen to head magnet schools and magnet theme questions are not part of the interview process for hiring for magnet leadership. District consideration of theme needs is secondary when placing teachers.

Ensure that district hiring practices consider knowledge of the magnet theme, marketing skills and commitment to the purpose of magnets in the district when matching school leaders to schools.

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Learning Immersion/Talent Development magnet schools do not have a direct K-12 Pathway, they feed to IB secondary schools. Families want to stay together in a pathway beyond elementary school rather than go into the IB secondary magnet schools and some of the IB middle schools are very competitive to get into.

Early and Middle College principals would like more support from the district to market their programs, receive their allotment numbers sooner to plan for staffing, continue to have the flexibility they have had in the past to convert money for staffing and professional development, and improve communication between their programs and the district.

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Create a viable and sustainable financial plan to provide sufficient training, staffing, programmatic support and innovative resources for magnet programs.

Build strong relationships with LC Superintendents to ensure shared vision and goals for magnet programs are a part of school improvement efforts.

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Clarify the purpose, mission and goals of magnet programs in CMS. Expand the magnet team to allow for specialized support for more structured integration with district curriculum. A larger team would allow for schools to receive guidance that is more strategic and intentional. Create more equitable opportunity for high quality program implementation by providing a dedicated magnet coordinator position at each school to oversee theme integration, marketing and recruiting. Ensure that district hiring practices consider knowledge of the magnet theme, marketing skills and commitment to the purpose of magnets in the district when matching school leaders to schools.

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Develop a community task force to support with community understanding of magnet programs. Include the operation of magnet schools in the district's strategic plan and outline goals, objectives and action steps specific to magnet schools in creating socioeconomic diversity.

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While many schools had family engagement and some had magnet theme-based partnerships, there was little to no district supported theme-based partnerships.

District changes are sometimes made quickly and without a lot of communication to families. Families in many schools' focus groups have said that while they love their school, they dislike that the district makes decisions without their input. There has been a lack of communication from the district around magnet realignment ex. Arts, Montessori.

Ensure there is collaborative input from school leaders and families in district-wide change initiatives such as moving magnet schools to new facilities.

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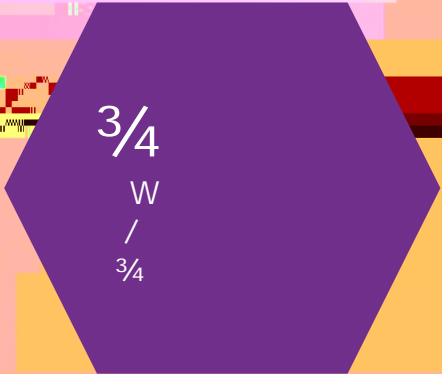
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Plan and implement a robust lottery campaign to fully engage families

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Ensure there is collaborative input between district and families in district-wide change initiatives
Increase collaboration with CMS strategic partnerships department to coordinate intentional theme-based partnerships with schools and programs.

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MSA commends Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools for their commitment to ensuring strong magnet schools by adhering to the Five Pillars and Ten Standards of Magnet Schools of America. The objective of this report and the site visits have been to highlight strengths, challenges and recommendations for each school as well as to highlight the overall district findings and recommendations and their commitment to magnet programs and diversity. The implementation of the recommendations in this report will demand diligent work and exercise, but it will serve as a cornerstone and a foundational document for the CMS community.

MSA encourages CMS to consider this report's recommendations as they support schools in school improvement planning and make decisions about adding, removing and supporting magnet programs in the district. CMS is a complex system; factors such as demographics, transportation, displacement and

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[MSA Report Part 1](#)

[MSA Blueprint/Pillars](#)

[What are Magnet Schools](#)