

Cholla High Magnet School*"Charging Fearlessly Toward**Academic and Personal Excellence"*

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TUSD

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Recently, I have had meetings with our Superintendent, Dr. H.T. Sanchez and Dr. Willis Hawley, Special Master assigned by the federal court overseeing TUSD's Desegregation Order. During School Year (SY) 2014-15, all TUSD magnet schools were asked to develop a Magnet Improvement Plan focusing on two pillars: Integration and Student Achievement. Cholla faculty and staff created a two-year plan (SY2015-16 and SY2016-17), as directed by the court and Dr. Hawley, to address the two pillars. Magnet schools were informed that the court, Dr. Hawley and the district would ask for data over the two years, to determine progress of both Integration and Student Achievement as outlined in the schools' Magnet Improvement Plan.

Seven weeks into SY2015-16, it has been determined by Special Master Hawley that Cholla High Magnet School is noncompliant in the area of Integration, and his recommendation therefore, is that the school should face the elimination of magnet funding.

Integration, as defined by the Unitary Status Plan;

An integrated school is any school in which no racial or ethnic group varies from the district average for that grade level (Elementary School, Middle School, K-8, High School) by more than +/- 15 percentage points, and in which no single racial or ethnic group exceeds 70% of the school's enrollment." [USP II.B]

The Unitary Status Plan provides the following definition for a racially concentrated school:

"1. Racially Concentrated School. A racially concentrated school is any school in which any racial or ethnic group exceeds 70% of the school's total enrollment, and any other school specifically defined as such by the Special Master in consultation with the Parties." [USP II.B]

Special Master Hawley has used Cholla's ninth grade demographic data as identified by TUSDStats on the 20th day as not meeting integration:

Grade		White/Anglo		African American		Hispanic		Native American		Asian American		Multi Racial		Total
		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
9	N	16	30	7	9	212	246	20	17	1	1	2	4	565
	%	2.8	5.3	1.2	1.6	37.5	43.5	3.5	3.0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.7	
Total	%		8.1		2.8		81.0		6.5		.4		1.1	

As identified by the ninth grade student demographic, Cholla is a racially concentrated school and, therefore, has not met the Integration pillar.

Student Achievement is the second pillar in which magnet status is being reviewed. Cholla High Magnet School has met the criteria set forth by the court by maintaining a "B" as identified by the Arizona Department of Education's AZLearns. The Magnet Improvement Plan addressed ways to continue to strengthen our Student Achievement including: Teacher-led Professional Learning Communities, interventions that support all students (tutoring) and continued IB training for content areas.

The loss of \$1.1 million dollars due to the elimination of magnet funding would affect the following programs:

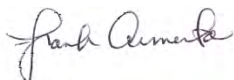
- IB Prep – open access classes for 9th and 10th grade students developed to prepare them for International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP)
- IB Diploma Programme – an internationally recognized programme for juniors and seniors in which the student can earn college credit and obtain scholarship monies.
 - In addition to English, Math, History and Science, IB Courses include:
 - Spanish A: Language and Literature, conducted in Spanish, a college level course in which students analyze literature
 - Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts – students enrolled in these courses, compose an original piece(s) in addition to studying theory within that fine art
 - 4,000 extended essay completed by the student, independent of a course, in which the student researches and answers a question on a topic of their choice
 - 150 hours of Creativity, Action and Service completed by the student outside of school hours. The student must identify a goal and reflect on their learning.
- JROTC – open access program in which students learn team building and discipline
- Arabic – a world language offered within our IB Prep and DP programme
- Law, Safety and Security, Criminal Minds in Literature, Forensics Biology and Pharmacy Technician

The above programs have generated approximately \$4.5 million dollars in scholarships for the Class of 2015. Diploma candidates averaged \$85,418, course candidates averaged \$37,279. The Class of 2015’s top earner, a Latina, was offered \$400,800. Twenty students (14 full diploma) earned over \$100,000. In addition to scholarships, 60% of our IB students scored high enough on one or more IB assessments to earn college credit.

As the principal of Cholla High Magnet School, I am asking for more time to implement our Magnet Plan. As an alumni, parent, student and community members, please voice your concerns regarding the possible elimination of Cholla’s magnet status and these important programs!

Our desegregation case involves two sets of lawyers: one appointed to represent the interests of Latino students/families and the other appointed to represent African American students/families. If you are a member of either of those plaintiff classes, “your” lawyers need to hear from you.

Frank Armenta, Principal



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