

APPENDIX II – 32

# Tucson Magnet Schools Evaluation

## Review of Promising Practices

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Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) currently has 19 magnet schools that provide families with options for schools with a variety of themes, including arts, International Baccalaureate, global studies, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), traditional academics, project-based learning and systems thinking, Montessori, Reggio-Emilia inspired, and inquiry based. Marzano Research designed and conducted an evaluation of the TUSD's magnet schools that addressed five research questions:

1. What are identified best practices for magnet schools?
2. How well do the strategies described in the TUSD's comprehensive magnet plan and the magnet plans for each magnet school align with the best practices identified in research question 1?
3. How are the 19 current magnet schools doing related to the following goals:
  - a. Attracting students from across the city?
  - b. Moving toward integration?
  - c. Improving academic achievement?
4. How attractive are new magnet themes under consideration to parents in the district?
5. What factors influence parents' decisions to send their students to magnet schools?

This report is the first of two reports that will describe the results of the evaluation. This report will focus on questions 1 and 2. Questions 3, 4, and 5 will be addressed in a separate report using data from a survey of parents and community members. The second report will also include recommendations based on the results for all research questions.

## What are identified best practices for magnet schools?

Marzano Research reviewed 25 reports on magnet schools to identify promising practices for magnet schools.<sup>1</sup> The promising practices described below are those that were identified by the authors of the documents. Practices were included if the authors described them as recommended practices or if the authors described them as being common among magnet programs that have been successful in achieving racial integration or attaining high levels of student achievement. These practices are organized into nine categories: planning for new magnet schools, outreach and marketing, admissions policies and enrollment priorities, staffing and leadership, curriculum and theme, community partnerships, promoting equity in schools with diverse student bodies, school characteristics, and continuous improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> A systematic process was used to identify the 25 reports. Specifically, researchers searched the "publications" or "resources" sections of the U.S. Department of Education, Magnet Schools of America, National Coalition on School Diversity, and National Center on School Choice websites. Next, four databases that catalog academic research (ERIC, PsycInfo, Academic Search Premier Plus, and Education Full Text) were searched using two pairs of key words: (1) "magnet school" and "integration," and (2) "magnet school" and "desegregation." Articles or reports that appeared relevant based on titles and abstracts and were published in the year 2000 or later were examined to identify best practices. An annotated bibliography describing each of the 25 reports is provided in the appendix.

## **Planning for new magnet schools**

Several of the reports described practices related to how districts developed their ideas for new magnet schools, including how new magnet themes were identified, developing the mission and vision of the school, considering how new magnet schools will fit within the larger context of the district, locating new schools, and ensuring adequate time for planning.

### ***Involve the community in identifying magnet themes***

Several of the reports recommended involving the community in identifying themes for magnet schools. Community involvement can include asking parents and community members to describe their ideal school (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a, 2008b). For example, in Miami, Florida, a request for proposals asked community members to “design the school of your dreams,” which resulted in the development of the district’s Design and Architecture Senior High (U.S. Department of Education, 2008b, p. 9). Ideas about themes for magnet schools can also come from examining industries that are currently prominent in the community or are likely to be in the future. For example, one report described how Houston heard from parents that it was important to them that their children gain skills to succeed in the oil and gas industries, which are prominent in the area. This led to the development of a magnet school with an engineering theme (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). Similarly, communities experiencing economic change due to loss of primary industries (e.g., decline in the number of blue-collar jobs due to a factory closing) can identify magnet themes that prepare students for white-collar careers that may be more prominent in the future. Other communities have developed magnet themes that focus on preparing students for careers for which there are persistent shortages of qualified workers (e.g., nursing; U.S. Department of Education, 2008b). When choosing magnet school themes, consideration should be given to themes that are unique and that have evidence of improving achievement or closing achievement gaps (Smrekar & Honey, 2015).

Once ideas for new magnet themes are developed, it is important to present the ideas to the community. During these presentations, school leaders can assess the current level of and try to build energy or excitement about the theme before moving forward with it. This could include surveying parents about potential themes (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a, 2008b). One way to build excitement or energy about magnet schools is to allow school communities (i.e., educators and parents from current schools) to develop applications for magnet status. One report that was reviewed suggested that this grassroots approach to developing magnet schools may result in schools that have greater appeal to parents, because parents are involved in developing the concept for the school (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

### ***Identify a clear mission/vision for the school***

Once the theme for a magnet school is identified, a clear mission and vision for the school should be identified. The mission of the school should make clear how the theme is a means for achieving the goal of student academic success. A clear mission that connects the theme to student success lays the foundation for a cohesive theme-integrated academic program. (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). In addition, magnet schools should articulate goals related to desegregation. One research study found that schools with clearly articulated desegregation goals were more likely to be integrated (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

***Consider how new magnet schools will fit within the rest of the district***

Many of the documents reviewed for this report recommended that districts consider the overall district context when planning for new magnet schools. This may involve analyzing both districtwide and neighborhood-specific enrollment patterns and achievement trends and considering how new magnet schools will fit within the district's master plan (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). For example, one report gathered data to compare information about parents in St. Louis, Missouri, and Cincinnati, Ohio, who enroll their children in magnet schools to those who do not. The study gathered information about parents' income, level of education, and so on in order to understand parents who are not enrolling their children in magnet schools to inform dissemination and marketing strategies (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000).

A district should consider how the new school will contribute to the district's overall goals and how it fits within the district's portfolio of choice options, which may include charter schools and open enrollment in addition to magnet schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). The presence of other options may impact the demand for magnet schools overall or by certain demographic subgroups (Betts, Rice, Zau, Tang, & Koedel, 2006; Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). For example, one study found that magnet schools in districts with charter schools were less likely to be integrated than magnet schools in districts that did not also have charter schools (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). It is also useful to consider how a new magnet school will fit within the portfolio of magnet schools that already exist. For example, districts should consider creating K–12 pipelines for particular themes (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2008a, 2008b).

Careful consideration of the district context can help minimize the extent to which new magnet schools compromise other schools in the district and can help maximize the likelihood that there will be adequate demand for the new magnet schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). When determining the number of magnet schools that a district should have in order to support its desegregation goals, it can be useful to consider the demographic makeup of the district and the willingness of parents in different demographic subgroups to send their children to magnet schools (Rossell, 2003). This could be accomplished using the approach used by Saporito (2003), which considered the total number of students in each ethnic category enrolled in the district and calculated the number of students who would have to change schools in order to achieve racial integration. For example, in Philadelphia, one study suggested that nearly three quarters of white students would have to change schools in order to achieve racial segregation (Saporito, 2003). This type of analysis coupled with information about the willingness of parents to send their children to magnet schools can be useful in determining the number of magnet schools that the district can feasibly support.

***Location***

The documents that were reviewed offered diverse recommendations about factors to consider when determining the location for new magnet schools. Some research suggested that locating magnet schools in low-income areas can help attract more affluent families, creating more diverse schools (Blazer, 2012). Other research found that schools placed in neighborhoods with a higher density of minority residents were less likely to be diverse than schools located in

neighborhoods with predominantly Caucasian residents (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Other documents suggested locating magnet schools near the border between neighborhoods with different demographic makeups (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). However, it is important to consider perceptions of safety in the neighborhoods where magnet schools are placed, as this may deter parents from choosing these schools (Smrekar & Honey, 2015).

One approach is to place schools that are of interest to specific demographic subgroups in locations that will promote integration. For example, in Montclair, New Jersey, there was a strong demand among parents in the predominantly minority southern part of the city for a “back to basics” theme. In the northern part of the city, which was predominantly European American, there was strong demand for a gifted education theme. The district placed the gifted education magnet in the south and the back to basics magnet in the north to promote integration (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Another approach is to locate magnet schools near places where parents work and offer priority for parents who work nearby. This strategy has been used to make longer travel times to magnet schools more palatable to parents because they can spend more time with their children while they commute together and because it would be easier for parents to be involved in the school. In Hamilton County, Tennessee, this approach was used to attract predominantly white suburban parents to schools in Chattanooga’s downtown (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a). In addition, some research has suggested that magnet schools located in a business district are more likely to reflect the diversity of the district than magnet schools in other locations (Smrekar & Honey, 2015).

### ***Allow time for planning before a new magnet opens***

Building in a planning period for new a magnet school allows the school’s staff the opportunity to work on building a theme-integrated curriculum before students arrive at school. For example, educators can use this time to work with experts in fields related to the theme to plan curriculum (e.g., an engineering magnet school working with faculty from the local university’s engineering department, a fine arts magnet school working with an organization of local artists), provide theme-specific training to staff and leaders, and visit successful magnet schools with the same theme in other districts. Ideally, theme-based training and planning with community partners will continue after the school is opened (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a).

## **Outreach and marketing**

Promising practices that were identified related to outreach and marketing fell into two main categories: marketing the school to potential students and their families and reaching out to the community as a whole.

### ***Marketing magnet schools to potential students and their families***

When marketing magnet schools, it is important to ensure that all parents have access to information that is presented in a manner they can use to make decisions (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000). Because parents may vary in their access to different modes of communication (e.g., Internet, broadcast television), a variety of modes of communication should be used (André-

Bechely, 2004). For example, one study found that low-income families were more likely to read newsletters than higher-income families (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000). Care should be taken to ensure that the information provided about schools and the process for applying is not overly complex and is presented at a reading level and in enough languages that it will be accessible to a wide variety of families (André-Bechely, 2004). Some districts have enlisted the help of marketing firms to create materials and provide training in marketing to magnet school leaders (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Marketing materials should highlight the academic success of the school, demonstrate how the school is different from other schools, and highlight the goal of enrolling a diverse student body (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2008a).

It is also important to recognize that many parents obtain information about schools through word-of-mouth. Thus, it is important to provide accurate information to local networks (e.g., by making sure teachers have accurate information, using local advisory groups to spread the word, reaching out to specific community groups; Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Smrekar & Goldring, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Some authors suggest disseminating information where parents “live and do business,” such as in grocery stores, doctors’ offices, laundromats, and public housing offices (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000).

Districtwide marketing efforts should be supplemented with efforts to reach communities that are underrepresented in the magnet school (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a). This may include face-to-face conversations with individual students and parents (“one family at a time” until word gets out and demand grows), specific outreach to feeder schools (e.g., magnet high school principal visiting middle schools to inform students of the magnet theme, guidance counselors visiting non-magnet feeder schools to talk to students in grades about to transition to a new school), or efforts targeted toward specific neighborhoods selected based on demographic characteristics (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Smrekar & Goldring, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008b). For example, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the district set up parent information centers that provided information about schools, including maps showing their locations. The centers were set up close to public transportation, employed culturally representative staff, and were open during the evening hours (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000).

Some research has highlighted the value of school visits as a source of information (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000). Parents reported that visits to magnet schools were one of the best sources of information (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Yet upper-income parents were about twice as likely to report using school visits as a source of information (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000). One strategy for providing equitable access to site visits for all students and their families is to offer transportation (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

### ***Reaching out to the community***

A magnet school should conduct community outreach to share the school’s vision and mission, as well as information about events happening at the school. This could include inviting community members or neighborhood organizations to the school, notifying the press about happenings in the school and inviting them to cover events at the school, speaking at public



events, holding open houses, and reaching out to realtors. The goal of these efforts is for the broader community (not just parents of school-aged children) to know that the school exists and what its theme and mission are (i.e., “scream your theme”) (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a).

### **Admissions policies and enrollment priorities**

When demand exceeds capacity for magnet schools, race-neutral enrollment priorities can be used to promote integration. One approach is to divide the city into clusters and give enrollment priority to those that are demographically least similar to the magnet school’s current enrollment (Betts et al., 2006). For schools that are in high demand among students from across the city, another approach is to provide a set proportion of seats for students who live near the school (Allensworth & Rosenkranz, 2000). A third approach is to give enrollment priority to students from low-income families (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013).

Research has suggested that competitive admissions processes are associated with higher student achievement (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013). However, other research has suggested that noncompetitive admission processes are associated with greater racial integration. The effect of competitive admissions processes appears to differ somewhat by the nature of the factors used in admissions. In one study, schools with competitive admissions processes that relied on essays and interviews were less segregated than schools that used other factors such as test scores and auditions (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

### **Staffing and leadership**

Promising practices in the area of staffing and leadership were related to the characteristics of staff in successful magnet schools, professional development, and the creation of a collaborative environment.

#### ***Magnet school staff***

Several of the documents that were reviewed highlighted the importance of a visionary leader for magnet school success. The leader should be committed to the theme and to creating a collaborative environment in the school. These types of leaders can attract like-minded, committed teachers. Magnet school leaders need to be willing to have a presence in the community to spread the word about the magnet program and to cultivate relationships with community partners (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013; Smrekar & Honey, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a, 2008b).

In addition, magnet schools may benefit from staff in specific roles, such as magnet coordinators or on-site experts in the theme. Magnet coordinators sometimes have primary responsibility for ensuring that the theme is integrated across the curriculum and can support teachers in developing learning experiences for students that are aligned to both the theme and to standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a). Ideally, teachers should have qualifications related to the theme (Lynch, Behrend, Burton, & Means, 2013; Poppell & Hague, 2001).

While working in a theme-based school is attractive to some teachers, districts may need to engage in broader recruitment efforts than is typical to find educators with the specialized skills

needed for a particular theme. This could include recruiting teachers from industry and supporting them to get certified (U.S. Department of Education, 2008b). Incentives such as on-site child care or guaranteed admission to the school for teachers' children may be useful for attracting high-quality staff (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). One study suggested an association between presence of policies to recruit a diverse staff and the degree to which the school was integrated (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2006).

### ***Professional development***

Teachers in magnet schools may face different challenges than other teachers in the district because of the unique themes and integration goals that magnet schools have. Teachers may need professional development related to the school's theme that focuses on how to integrate it across the curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). Professional development may also be needed to prepare staff to work with students from diverse backgrounds (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2008a).

### ***Collaborative environment***

Distributed leadership is a characteristic of many successful magnet schools. Providing opportunities for all teachers to be leaders cultivates buy-in, which is important because more is often asked of teachers in magnet schools than traditional schools (e.g., developing an innovative curriculum, participating in recruitment efforts; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a). These opportunities create an appealing professional environment that can attract high-quality educators to the school (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). Distributed leadership can help sustain a school's success through periods of change, such as when the founding principal of the school leaves (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a).

In addition to distributed leadership, many successful magnet schools have worked to create a collaborative working environment. Teachers are expected to work together to develop and implement the theme-integrated curriculum. To support this expectation, extra time for teacher planning and collaboration is built into the school's schedule (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

### **Curriculum and theme**

In order to develop a rigorous and relevant theme-integrated curriculum, magnet schools may want to develop ongoing collaborative relationships with experts in the magnet theme. Educators and magnet theme experts can work together to develop units that are infused with the theme and are aligned to content standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). Recommendations include providing students with opportunities to use higher-order thinking to solve real-world problems related to the magnet theme (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a).

Successful magnet schools often offer advanced coursework such as dual credit courses, advanced placement courses, and International Baccalaureate courses. High school magnet schools often have graduation requirements that exceed typical standards. Additional graduation requirements include activities such as creating portfolios, completing senior projects, and completing additional foreign language coursework. The extra requirements are designed to better prepare students for college or a career related to the theme. For example, a medical

careers magnet school in Los Angeles requires students to complete 40 hours of community service in a hospital setting. These volunteer hours in combination with the required coursework enable students to become certified nursing assistants when they graduate (U.S. Department of Education, 2008b).

### **Community partnerships**

Several of the documents recommended that magnet schools develop strong partnerships with community organizations, such as cultural institutions, universities, businesses, and industry. Successful magnet schools often develop partnerships that are reciprocal in nature. Examples include a partnership between a magnet school and a school of education at a local university. In this partnership, the university helps support the school and the school provides a setting for the teacher candidates to complete their field experiences. Another example is when career-focused magnet schools partner with industry. Industry partners help ensure that the school is cutting edge, while the school prepares students who will be well qualified to join the workforce upon graduation. Partnerships with community organizations can also support the creation of theme-aligned afterschool programs (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013; Poppell & Hague, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a, 2008b).

### **Promoting equity in schools with diverse student bodies**

After magnet schools successfully enroll diverse students, they must meet the challenge of providing an equitable experience for all students. Successful magnet schools accomplish this in a variety of ways, including strategies to provide equitable opportunities for all students, promote positive intercultural contact, and support all students to meet high academic expectations.

#### ***Ensuring access to opportunities***

One way that magnet schools provide equitable opportunities for all students is by providing transportation to school. Policies include providing transportation for students who live farther away than a specified distance from the school (e.g., one mile; Smrekar & Goldring, 2000; Tefera, Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Chirichigno, 2011). Another approach is to structure major projects so that all of the work is completed at school with provided materials. For example, a museum-themed magnet school required students to create exhibits. School staff wanted to ensure that students' ability to complete the projects well was not limited by access to expensive materials, adult help, and computer equipment at home. To avoid this issue, all exhibits were created at school (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a).

#### ***Promoting positive intercultural contact***

One report that was reviewed described efforts to promote positive intercultural contact. In one successful magnet school, an equity team was created (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). This committee, composed of school staff, meets regularly to assess the extent to which all policies and practices in the school are consistent with the goal of creating a school where all students feel welcome and can be successful. The use of instructional strategies that engage diverse students in working together, such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring, is also a common approach in successful magnet schools.

### ***Supporting all students to meet high academic expectations***

Many of the successful magnet schools described in the reports were committed to offering rigorous coursework to all students based on interest, regardless of background. These schools are committed to providing instruction in mixed-ability classrooms. To meet this challenge, structures are in place to support teachers in providing differentiated instruction, including allowing teachers extra time to collaboratively analyze student data to guide instructional adjustments. In addition, many schools offer extra supports or “academic safety nets” for struggling students. Strategies include academic tutoring during lunch or after school, Saturday school, and extra staff to work with struggling students. For magnet schools with students taking advantage of free transportation, bus schedules must be considered when designing these extra supports (Lynch et al., 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008a, 2008b).

### **School characteristics**

The research reviewed suggested a relationship between particular school characteristics and both demand for magnet schools and their success at achieving integration. Several studies compared whole-school magnet schools and school-within-a-school magnet programs. Unfortunately, these studies did not always define whole-school magnet schools in the same way. For example, some research suggested that whole-school magnet schools (defined as schools where everyone in the school is enrolled in the theme-based program) are more likely to be integrated than magnet programs where only some students in the school are enrolled in the theme-based program (Blazer, 2012; Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Goldring & Smrekar, 2000; Poppell & Hague, 2001). Another study found that whole-school magnet schools (defined as schools where every student went through an application process to attend the school) were more likely to be integrated than magnet programs where only some students in the school are enrolled in the theme-based program and magnet programs where some seats are reserved for students in the neighborhood (Smrekar & Goldring, 2000).

Finally, it is not surprising that demand is greater for schools that are academically high performing (Betts et al., 2006). Smrekar and Honey (2015) found that high test scores were one reason that parents in their study cited for choosing magnet schools. Smrekar and Goldring (2000) found that higher-income parents were significantly more likely than lower-income parents to choose a school because of its academic reputation.

### **Continuous improvement**

One of the reports recommended that magnet schools and their districts engage in activities to promote continuous improvement (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). One recommendation is to regularly reevaluate and reassess themes to ensure they are still appealing and relevant to parents. In some districts, magnet schools are used as incubators for innovative practices. Once successful practices are identified, an effort is made to spread them across the district. As a result, the appeal of the magnet school may wane as those innovative practices become more commonplace in district schools. When demand for a magnet school begins to decline, it is important to talk to parents and staff to gather information about the causes for the decline in demand. The results can be used to guide efforts to make changes that will drive increased interest in the school.

A second recommendation is to engage in continual evaluation of the extent to which magnet schools are meeting their goals related to integration and academic achievement. These efforts should involve parents and community members and may also involve outside evaluators. The purpose of these efforts is to identify what is working well and what is not working in order to guide efforts at improving the school (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

### **How well do the strategies described in the TUSD's comprehensive magnet plan and the magnet plans for each magnet school align with the identified promising practices?**

To address this question, Marzano Research reviewed the TUSD's comprehensive magnet plan (CMP; filed with the court on January 28, 2016) and individual schools' magnet plans and budgets for the 2016–17 school year. The CMP primarily focuses on plans to improve integration and academic achievement in magnet schools and on the process for eliminating magnet programs. Individual magnet school plans are included as appendices in the CMP. These school plans are presented in tabular form and present only brief descriptions of activities and strategies for which magnet school funding will be used. The 2016–17 school plans are also focused heavily on the budget for the magnet school funding and provide even less detail on planned strategies than was provided in the 2015–16 plans.

After reviewing the plans, it became clear that given their limited scope, they could not be expected to provide complete information about what individual magnet schools and the district are currently doing related to all nine of the categories of promising practices identified above. It may be the case that the TUSD and individual magnet schools are engaging in activities and strategies that align with the promising practices but that were not discussed in the plans. Further data collection that is beyond the scope of this project would be required to accurately assess the extent to which the strategies and practices currently being used by the TUSD and individual magnet schools align with the identified promising practices. Below we provide a description of strategies that align with the identified promising practices in three categories that were most evident in the magnet plans.

#### **Outreach and marketing**

The CMP briefly described the TUSD Magnet Department's efforts to *market magnet schools to potential students and their families*. In particular, the Magnet Department works with the Communications Department to implement marketing and recruitment campaigns. The Magnet Department also works with family centers and supports events and outreach activities. All of the schools' magnet plans described recruitment efforts. These included efforts to reach a broad range of parents using different approaches, such as participating in magnet fairs; ensuring updated information is available on school ratings websites (e.g., [greatschools.org](http://greatschools.org)); holding open houses and offering tours; distributing marketing materials to local businesses, libraries, medical offices, and government offices; using social media (e.g., Facebook, YouTube); and attending community events. Schools also described targeted marketing efforts designed to provide information about the school to demographic subgroups that are currently underrepresented in the school. These included intensive recruitment efforts in particular preschools and feeder schools that enroll high densities of students belonging to subgroups that are underrepresented in the magnet schools (e.g., distributing marketing materials, holding recruitment events, inviting

students to events at the school) and intensive recruitment efforts in neighborhoods with high densities of families belonging to subgroups that are underrepresented in the magnet schools (e.g., reaching out to neighborhood associations and attending community events in targeted neighborhoods).

Individual schools' magnet plans also described *outreach to the community*. These included efforts to make the public aware of the school, its theme, and events and accomplishments at the school. These included public service announcements, reaching out to realtors, reaching out to community groups, and inviting the broader community to events at the school. Two schools described outreach strategies in a bit more detail. Holladay described plans to create a traveling performance team and a mobile art exhibit that could be used to showcase the school's fine and performing arts theme at community events. Roskrue described an effort to recruit students to serve as dual language ambassadors at community events as a way to promote the school's dual language theme.

### **Staffing and leadership**

The CMP and individual magnet school plans provided information about *magnet school staff*, *professional development*, and creating *collaborative environments*. In particular, the CMP described how magnet coordinators will support professional learning communities (PLCs) and improvement of instruction. Individual school plans also described using magnet coordinators to lead recruitment efforts and support teachers to develop theme-integrated instruction. The school plan for Tully specifically mentioned the leadership of the school, noting that the school has a "visionary leader who has a deep commitment to Gifted and Talented programs and believes that all children can be successful."

With respect to professional development, the CMP and individual school plans describe a range of planned activities. Much of the planned professional development is related to the broad goal of improving student achievement. For example, districtwide efforts focus on the implementation of PLCs and learner-centered professional development directly related to challenges identified by teachers. Some schools included plans for professional development related specifically to the theme of the school. For example, Bonillas indicated plans for professional development in systems thinking, Drachman planned for professional development in the Montessori model, and Tully planned professional development related to gifted and talented education. Some school plans also mentioned providing professional development on culturally responsive teaching methods and culturally relevant curriculum.

All of the schools' plans and the CMP describe efforts to create a collaborative environment. In particular, all of the plans discuss building in extra time in the schools' schedules for teachers to meet and work together in PLC teams. Several plans also highlighted the use of peer observation and coaching.

### **Promoting equity in schools with diverse student bodies**

Both the CMP and the individual school plans describe efforts related to *ensuring access to opportunities*, *promoting positive intercultural contact*, and *supporting all students to meet high academic expectations*. With respect to ensuring access to opportunities, the CMP indicates that

transportation is provided to students. In addition, the CMP mentions that, to the extent possible, transportation will be provided to students who are involved in activities that take place after school. The CMP also describes the use of strategies such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring that can promote positive intercultural contact. The individual school plan for Mansfield describes this in greater detail, noting “teachers will organize activities and projects that foster student collaboration and that honor the multiple cultures and languages . . . represented in the classroom.”

Within this category, the plans contain the most detail about the strategies being used to support all students to meet high academic expectations. Both the CMP and individual school plans describe an overall approach to using multitiered systems of support, including outlining strategies to improve and differentiate tier 1 instruction and utilizing extra staff, such as teaching assistants, instructional specialists, and interventionists, to provide tier 2 and 3 instruction. Most of the plans describe using teaching assistants in classrooms to provide assistance with classroom management and to facilitate enrichment activities, which will allow classroom teachers the flexibility to provide small-group instruction to struggling students. In addition, several school plans include descriptions of efforts to support students outside the school day, including before- and after-school tutoring, Saturday school, and summer programs.

## Conclusion

Marzano Research reviewed 25 reports on magnet schools to identify promising practices. The identified promising practices fell into nine categories: planning for new magnet schools, outreach and marketing, admissions policies and enrollment priorities, staffing and leadership, curriculum and theme, community partnerships, promoting equity in schools with diverse student bodies, school characteristics, and continuous improvement. Next, we examined the TUSD’s magnet plans as well as magnet plans for individual schools to assess the extent to which the practices in use in the TUSD aligned with the identified best practices. Unfortunately, the magnet plans were limited in scope and did not provide the level of detail needed to determine if practices in place related to all nine categories. It is possible that some practices that were not identified in the plans are in place in the TUSD. Plans did describe a variety of strategies in place that align with promising practices in three categories: outreach and marketing, staffing and leadership, and promoting equity in schools with diverse student bodies.

## Appendix A

This appendix provides the references and abstracts for each of the 25 reports that were reviewed. While some reports did not identify promising practices, we included them in this appendix for reference.

**Allensworth, E. M., & Rosenkranz, T. (2000). *Access to magnet schools in Chicago*. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.**

This report describes the magnet schools in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and analyzes students' access to magnet schools based on their ethnicity and residential location within the city. It also examines change in CPS enrollment patterns that may be related to the development of new magnet schools and magnet school policies. The report begins with a brief history of magnet school policies and a description of Chicago's magnet schools and programs. Data from 32 of the 47 elementary schools that the CPS calls magnet schools are used in this report. The next section describes the location of magnet elementary schools, enrollment patterns at these schools, and changes that have occurred since the implementation of the comprehensive magnet school policy. High schools are examined in the third section. The report concludes with implications for access to magnet schools suggested by population growth patterns over the last several years. Findings show that students in the wealthiest sections of the city have access to many more magnet schools than other families in Chicago, with the least access available to Latino neighborhoods and very low-income African American areas on the South Side of Chicago. African American students must travel farther, on average, than other students to attend the highest achieving schools in the city. Findings also show that many magnet elementary schools do not meet the desegregation goals of the Desegregation Consent decree for CPS.

**André-Bechely, L. (2004). *The goals of a voluntary integration program and the problems of access: A closer look at a magnet school application brochure*. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 37*, 302–315.**

The article incorporates a critical theoretical and methodological framework to study a large urban district's implementation of a court-ordered voluntary integration program through magnet school choice. Drawing on the interview data from parents and district staff, the author analyzes the data as they relate to the district's magnet school application brochure, Opportunities for Success, and how the application is designed to support the voluntary integration program. The article first presents a short historical grounding for the district's voluntary integration program and how it influences the choice options for parents. Next, it discusses how the district implemented and organized the voluntary integration program and produced the magnet school application text. It then introduces data on parents' interactions with the magnet school brochure and application. The article concludes with a discussion of what can be learned from studying the texts of a voluntary integration program, what it tells us about racial and class privilege and diverse families' access to magnet school programs, and how text analysis can help us see where, in the institutional processes of school choice, further resegregation is likely to take place.



**Betts, J. R., Rice, L. A., Zau, A. C., Tang, Y. E., & Koedel, C.R. (2006) *Does school choice work? Effects on student integration and achievement*. San Francisco, CA: Public Policy Institute of California.**

School choice refers to the various ways parents can choose a school for their children. Throughout U.S. history, parents have been able to choose among schools indirectly by choosing where to live. But today, many other avenues are also available. For instance, many districts offer open-enrollment programs, busing and magnet school programs, charter schools, and, in a few cases, vouchers that allow some families to send their children to private schools. Throughout its long and varied history, school choice has been a controversial topic in American politics. Proponents argue that more affluent families have long enjoyed school choice, through both private schools and the ability to move to better schools by buying a house in the school's attendance area. Wider school choice merely opens up some of these same opportunities to less affluent families, proponents contend. In addition, they say, school choice can better serve the disparate needs of heterogeneous students than can the stereotypical "one-size-fits-all" school administered by district officials. Finally, proponents argue that greater competition among public—and perhaps private—schools for students will boost the quality of education through competitive pressures. Opponents of school choice enumerate several problems. An expanded system of choice could leave some students behind, possibly in failing schools. Choice, they argue, by allowing students to leave their local schools at will, could result in the resegregation of the nation's schools along lines of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Although the term "choice" can also encompass voucher programs, which provide public subsidies for students to attend private schools, and which have been implemented in several cities nationwide, such programs are limited in scope. Rather, various forms of public school choice, such as traditional busing, magnet schools, open-enrollment programs, and, more recently, charter schools, provide the main form of school choice in America today and are likely to do so for some time to come. They are also the four options offered at the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), and so voucher programs are not a part of this study.

**Bifulco, R., Cobb, C. D., & Bell, C. (2009). *Can interdistrict choice boost student achievement? The case of Connecticut's interdistrict magnet school program*. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31, 323–345.**

Connecticut's interdistrict magnet schools offer a model of choice-based desegregation that appears to satisfy current legal constraints. This study presents evidence that interdistrict magnet schools have provided students from Connecticut's central cities access to less racially and economically isolated educational environments and estimates the impact of attending a magnet school on student achievement. To address potential selection biases, the analyses exploit the random assignment that results from lottery-based admissions for a small set of schools, as well as value-added and fixed-effect estimators that rely on pre-magnet school measures of student achievement to obtain effect estimates for a broader set of interdistrict magnet schools. Results indicate that attendance at an interdistrict magnet high school has positive effects on the math and reading achievement of central city students and that interdistrict magnet middle schools have positive effects on reading achievement.

**Blazer, C. (2012). *A review of the research on magnet schools*. Miami, FL: Miami-Dade County Public Schools.**

The bulk of this report focuses on studies that have compared the academic achievement of magnet school students to that of students attending traditional public schools. Studies examining differences

between magnet and non-magnet schools and students on the following three issues are also summarized: ethnic and economic composition of schools; high school graduation rates; and students' academic attitudes and behaviors. Each issue is discussed in more detail below. The studies summarized below are divided into three categories: studies finding that magnet schools have a positive impact on student achievement; studies finding no difference in the achievement of magnet and non-magnet students; and studies finding higher achievement among non-magnet students. Almost all of the studies reviewed for this report found that magnet schools were associated with higher levels of student achievement or that there were comparable levels of performance between students attending magnet and non-magnet schools. Only one study reported that achievement levels were consistently lower among magnet school students than traditional public school students.

**Frankenberg, E., & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2008). *The forgotten choice? Rethinking magnet schools in a changing landscape*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project at UCLA.**

This report is an analysis of responses to a survey of public school employees, ranging from teachers to superintendents, associated with magnet schools. The survey was administered with the cooperation of the Magnet Schools of America at its spring 2008 conference. These data have been independently analyzed by the Civil Rights Project staff.

**Goldring, E., & Smrekar, C. (2000). Magnet schools and the pursuit of racial balance. *Education and Urban Society*, 33, 17–35.**

This article explores magnet schools and racial diversity. We begin with a review of the research on magnet schools in terms of understanding the value and impact of magnet schools as a tool for reducing racial segregation. The analyses differentiate between within-school and districtwide outcomes. How effective are magnets in reducing racial isolation? What accounts for these differential effects? We follow this macro-level analysis with findings from our 3-year study of magnets in two major urban school districts: St. Louis and Cincinnati. We conclude this article with troubling indications that the post-busing era of desegregation and litigation signals a heavy reliance on magnet schools and parental choice without the commitment to diversity goals that marked earlier decades of social and educational reform.

**Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity. (2013). *Integrated magnet schools: Outcomes and best practices*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Law School.**

An important part of the rationale for magnet schools is the desire to create a school environment that improves academic achievement for students of all races. There are two primary ways that magnets seek to do this – through enhanced, often specialized academic programs and by providing an integrated learning environment. This section reviews the empirical literature that looks at student achievement in magnets. Studies comparing magnets to traditional public schools are reviewed first, followed by those comparing them to the other major choice program used in the U.S., charter schools. Other factors are covered in subsequent sections, including the role of integration in performance outcomes, alternative performance measures and description of a few model programs.

**Kahlenberg, R. D. (2009). *Turnaround schools that work: Moving beyond separate but equal*. New York, NY: The Century Foundation.**

Education Secretary Arne Duncan courageously has taken on the most important—and most difficult—problem in American education: turning around America’s lowest-performing schools. Duncan has noted that for years districts allowed failing schools to slide and has called, instead, for “far-reaching reforms” that fundamentally change the culture in the country’s worst five thousand schools. Seeking to transform these poorly performing schools into successful ones—creating what is known as “turnaround schools”—is indeed an ambitious challenge. Ironically, Duncan’s approach, which focuses almost entirely on changing the faculty and school governance, is itself too timid. In Education Week, Duncan wrote that, in Chicago, “We moved the adults out of the building, kept the children there, and brought in new adults.” But the exclusive focus on achieving performance gains through changing the principal and teachers misses the important role played by the two other big groups in a school community: students and parents. There is ample research showing that having an economic mix in that larger community can have a beneficial result. The turnaround approach taken in Chicago was a partial one, and, as education consultant Bryan Hassel told the *New York Times*, it achieved only “mixed” results. The Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago noted in a recent report that “most students in Chicago Public Schools continue to fail.” Nationally, turnaround schools have seen “lackluster” results. While there have been “scattered, individual successes,” according to a widely cited 2007 report by Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, research finds “very little enduring progress at scale.” Citing extensive research in California, Ohio, Maryland, and elsewhere, Andrew Smarick writes in *Education Next*, “overall, school turnaround efforts have consistently fallen short of hopes and expectations.” Likewise, as we shall see below, while some charter schools such as Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) schools and the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) Promise Academies have been highly successful with low-income students, those models have limited applicability to the nation’s five thousand lowest-performing public schools.

**Lynch, S. J., Behrend, T., Burton, E. P., & Means, B. (2013, April). *Inclusive STEM-focused high schools: STEM education policy and opportunity structures*. Paper presented at the NARST Annual International Conference, Rio Grande, PR.**

This paper introduces a pair of relatively new research projects that focus on an innovative type of school that is quietly emerging across the U.S., Inclusive STEM-focused High Schools (ISHSs). Unlike older, highly selective STEM-focused schools that target students already identified as being STEM gifted/talented, the goal of ISHSs is to develop new sources of STEM talent among underrepresented minority students, and provide them with the means to succeed in school and in STEM jobs, college majors, and careers (Means, Confrey, House, & Bhanot, 2008; Scott, 2009). ISHSs have the exciting potential to create entirely new opportunity structures (Roberts, 1968) for students underrepresented in STEM fields because they help connect the dots between K-12 schooling, higher education, and STEM jobs and careers through innovative education programs that are delivered at the school level, but expand the boundaries of the normal school day and year (Carnegie Corporation, 2009). ISHSs blur boundaries between formal and informal education, and can potentially reconfigure relationships among teachers, students, and knowledge (Coburn; 2003; Elmore, 1996). Their innovative school designs are pushing limits for practice by engaging students with their communities, STEM business and industry, and early opportunities for higher education experiences (Means et al., 2008).

**Poppell, J. B., & Hague, S. A. (2001, April). *Examining indicators to assess the overall effectiveness of magnet schools: A study of magnet schools in Jacksonville, Florida*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA.**

The effectiveness of the magnet school program of the Duval County Public Schools, Florida, was studied. The magnet schools were established at approximately half of the district's 150 schools as part of a desegregation plan. The schools offered a variety of theme programs. In spring 1998, the program was evaluated by four subcommittees of a steering committee, focusing on: (1) the unique and innovative nature of the program; (2) the achievement of desegregation; (3) academic achievement; and (4) parent and community involvement. The committee found that the number of schools with the "magnet" designation should be reduced, and the focus of the remaining magnets be better defined. Academic achievement for magnet school students was found to exceed that of nonmagnet school students at all levels. Thirty-seven of the district's 78 schools with magnet programs met the minimum desegregation requirements of the court's mandate. Forty-two percent of the elementary magnet schools and 39% of the secondary magnet schools had above-average volunteer participation, and similar percentages had an above-average number of business partners. The obvious success of these programs in the areas of academic achievement and community and parent involvement indicate the benefits to students resulting from parent choice in school selection and assignment.

**Rossell, C. (2003). The desegregation efficiency of magnet schools. *Urban Affairs Review*, 38, 697–725.**

Magnet schools are an attempt to introduce market incentives into school desegregation policy. The analyses presented here assess the extent to which they have improved the effectiveness of desegregation plans in a 600-school-district national sample from 1968 to 1991. I find that adding magnet schools to a voluntary plan does not seem to produce any more interracial exposure than does a voluntary plan without magnets. Moreover, there are diminishing marginal returns to magnets. The greater the percentage of magnets in a voluntary desegregation plan, the greater the white flight and the less the gain in interracial exposure. The effectiveness of magnets also varies by structure.

**Saporito, S. (2003). Private choices, public consequences: Magnet school choice and segregation by race and poverty. *Social Problems*, 50, 181–203.**

Little is known about the influence of school choice programs on race and economic segregation in public schools. Studies of housing segregation suggest that small differences in the preferences of particular race or socio-economic groups have the potential to produce large-scale patterns of segregation. In this study, I raise three questions regarding the link between individual choice and educational segregation: first, are the school choices of higher status families driven by a desire to avoid schools populated by students they consider to be of lower race or class status? Second, can other school features, such as safety, appearance, and educational quality, explain apparent race- or class-based choices? Third, can families' choices of schools be linked directly with segregation patterns independent of school district policies that may interfere with (or galvanize) the ability of people to exercise their choices? To answer these questions, I analyze magnet school application data from a large city to explore the choices of families for schools that vary in racial and economic composition. Findings show that white families avoid schools with higher percentages of non-white students. The tendency of white families to avoid schools with higher percentages of non-whites cannot be accounted for by other school characteristics such as test scores, safety, or poverty rates. I also find that wealthier families avoid schools with higher poverty rates. The choices of white and wealthier students lead to increased racial and economic segregation in the neighborhood schools that these students leave. Moreover, the link between choice and segregation cannot be explained by school district policies. Findings suggest

that laissez faire school choice policies, which allow the unfettered movement of children in and out of schools, may further deteriorate the educational conditions for disadvantaged students left behind in local public schools.

**Siegel-Hawley, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2011). *Magnet school student outcomes: What the research says*. Washington, DC: National Coalition on School Diversity.**

This research brief outlines six major studies of magnet school student outcomes. Magnet schools are programs with special themes or emphases designed to attract families from a variety of different backgrounds. They were originally established to promote voluntary racial integration in urban districts. The following studies are located within a much broader body of research that documents the benefits of attending racially and socioeconomically diverse schools. Some of what we know from the literature on the benefits of racial diversity indicates that students of all races who attend diverse schools have higher levels of critical thinking, an ability to adopt multiple perspectives; diminished likelihood for acceptance of stereotypes, higher academic achievement, more cross-racial friendships, willingness to attend diverse colleges and live in diverse neighborhoods, access to more privileged social networks, higher feelings of civic and communal responsibility, higher college-going rates, more prestigious jobs.

**Siegel-Hawley, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2012). *Reviving magnet schools: Strengthening a successful choice option. A research brief*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project at UCLA.**

The following policy brief refocuses our attention on the more longstanding magnet sector. It is issued during a time of complex political and legal circumstances and seeks to understand how a variety of factors—including the Parents Involved ruling and the transition to a U.S. Department of Education led by the Obama Administration—have influenced federally- funded magnet programs. Data from our 2011 survey of magnet school leaders indicates that magnet schools are continuing to evolve. Significant differences emerged between the two most recent magnet- funding cycles, the first overseen by the Bush Administration (in the midst of the Parents Involved decision) and the second by Obama’s Department of Education. Respondents connected to the 2010-2013 funding cycle indicated that their magnet programs were associated with more inclusive admissions processes, a resurgence of interest in pursuing racially diverse enrollments and an increased willingness to allow out-of-district students to attend magnet programs. Respondents from all federal funding cycles reported that their magnet schools were linked to evidence of heightened academic achievement, very high levels of demand and self- sustaining programs (i.e. the magnet school or program continued to flourish after the funding cycle ended). While the respondent pool was not large, and though federally funded magnets are simply a subset of all magnet programs, the data highlight early signs of what may be an important shift towards the original goals of the magnet concept. Survey participants also underscored the on- going popularity and success of their magnet programs. More research is, of course, needed, but all of these trends indicate that it is important to continue to provide support for the magnet school sector, and to include equalizing federal funding for magnet and charter school programs as part of a federal policy agenda focused on innovation and equity.

**Smrekar, C., & Goldring, E. (2000, May). *Social class isolation and racial diversity in magnet schools*. Paper presented at a meeting of the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, New York, NY.**

This paper explores issues related to magnet schools and racial diversity, reviewing research on magnet schools that underscores the importance of analyzing how effective magnets are in reducing racial isolation, how these data differ across districts, and what accounts for these differential effects. The paper also includes findings from a 3-year study of magnet schools in two major urban school districts (Saint Louis, Missouri, and Cincinnati, Ohio), examining the social context of school choice in order to highlight the interplay between choice policies and efforts aimed at school desegregation. It focuses specifically on issues of social class isolation in the context of magnet school systems that are designed to address racial diversity, arguing that these persistent patterns of socioeconomic segregation can be arrested under certain conditions. The paper concludes by discussing indications that the post-busing era of desegregation and litigation signals a heavy reliance upon magnet schools and parental choice without the commitment to diversity goals that marked earlier decades of social and educational reform.

**Smrekar, C., & Honey, N. (2015). The desegregation aims and demographic contexts of magnet schools: How parents choose and why siting policies matter. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 90(1), 128–155.**

This paper is designed to specify a set of new opportunities for educators, school administrators, and scholars to realize the practical aims and strategic advantages envisioned in magnet schools. The paper is divided into three distinct sections. In Section I, we examine the extensive research literature on parents' choice patterns and school preferences in magnet schools and other school-choice programs. In Section II, we compare the reasons parents choose particular schools with the criteria school districts use to select magnet school locations (and themes). This section highlights desegregation goals and district-level magnet school policies pegged to the following questions: What is the policy context for siting decisions in districts with magnet schools? Are siting policies strategically aligned with what is known from the research literature about parents' school preferences? Do neighborhood characteristics play a part in magnet school siting policies and specific decision-making? In Section III, we use geographic information system (GIS) tools to add both clarity and complexity to the convergence of parent choice patterns and sociodemographic diversity in our four selected school districts. The maps depict the racial and socioeconomic characteristics of the magnet schools in each district, as well as the demographic characteristics of surrounding census tracts (extended school neighborhoods). We conclude that GIS can be a viable option for improving the siting decisions for magnet schools, and that this can allow for the merging of parent choice priorities with educational equity and diversity goals of the district.

**Straus, R. M. (2004) Reconstructing Los Angeles magnet schools: Representations in newspapers. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 79, 98–121.**

This article is a study of the social construction of school desegregation in Los Angeles, California. Particular emphasis is placed on how magnet schools were presented to area residents in the local press over a period of 3 decades. I use quantitative and qualitative techniques with 355 newspaper articles. I find that magnet schools were originally discussed as part of a larger desegregation program, but that references to desegregation declined steadily. Magnet schools are now discussed as providers of academic excellence, and desegregation issues are largely ignored. This follows the current trend in political and academic circles, in which the rhetoric surrounding education is increasingly focused on standards and accountability rather than equality and access.

**Taggart, A., & Shoho, A. R. (2013). Attracting diverse students to a magnet school: Risking aspirations or swallowing one's beliefs. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 16, 20–32.**

This case study focuses on the ethics of advocating for a social justice perspective versus jeopardizing one's career aspirations. There are numerous subplots to this case involving the start-up of a new magnet school, including its leaders' concerns for meeting accountability measures and representing racially diverse, limited English proficient, and economically disadvantaged students. Through this case, we illustrate the conflicting choices school leaders may face when trying to balance their own career aspirations with their advocacy of social justice issues for underrepresented groups of students. By using Starratt's ethical framework along with Strike, Haller, and Soltis's and Shapiro and Stefkovich's work on ethical dilemmas, this case highlights the importance of having an ethical framework to base administrative decision making that supports social justice actions for all students.

**Tefera, A., Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., & Chirichigno, G. (2011). *Integrating suburban schools: How to benefit from growing diversity and avoid segregation*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Civil Rights Project.**

The following manual was written to help guide education stakeholders—including parents, students, school board members, community activists, administrators, policymakers and attorneys—in your efforts to promote racial diversity and avoid racial isolation in suburban school systems. This manual provides critical information on the current legal, political and policy issues that inform those efforts. It first addresses the critical importance of creating diverse learning environments in racially changing suburban school districts. The manual then addresses the legal landscape governing school integration policy, in addition to outlining general principles for creating racially diverse schools. We also examine the vital role that teachers and administrators play in building successfully integrated schools and classrooms. The second half of the manual includes a number of specific examples of suburban school districts experimenting with strategies to promote integrated schools. We dedicate the final chapter to describing methods for building the political will in your community for voluntary integration policies. In order to make the manual as reader-friendly as possible, we provide you with a list of further reading materials at the end of each section but deliberately do not include specific citations within the text. The appendix of the manual contains an extensive list of education and legal resources that may further assist in your voluntary integration efforts.

**U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Creating successful magnet schools programs*. Washington, DC: Author.**

As is the case with the implementation of any education reform initiative, no one is doing everything 100 percent right and no one has "all the answers." Within these pages, we have identified six school districts whose successful magnet programs offer a range of contexts, experiences, and perspectives that we hope will be helpful to others. The districts featured include two whose experience in implementing magnet schools spans more than a quarter century and one whose magnet schools experience began four short years ago. While all of these school districts have received support through the federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program at one time or another, all have also demonstrated a capacity to sustain their schools after the federal funding ended. While working to decrease minority group isolation and offer innovative programs to children and parents, they have kept their primary focus on the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement. And perhaps most importantly, they have developed a way of doing business that allows them to continuously improve over the years. While

these districts should not be seen as “models,” and while the case study methodology used herein does not provide the type of information about cause-and-effect that scientifically based research does, we do hope that other school districts can learn from the examples in this book. The common sense “promising practices” described in these chapters can help districts take their magnet school programs to the next level.

**U.S. Department of Education. (2008a). *Creating and sustaining successful K–8 magnet schools*. Washington, DC: Author.**

This guide provides examples of promising strategies and case studies for district leaders and school staff interested in building and growing their own magnet schools. The schools profiled here have adopted continuous improvement plans based on data. As a result, their students’ achievement has improved significantly. This guide is one in a series of Innovations in Education publications produced by the U.S. Department of Education. I congratulate the schools highlighted here, and hope that educators and others can learn from their experiences.

**U.S. Department of Education. (2008b). *Creating and sustaining successful magnet high schools*. Washington, DC: Author.**

In the following pages, you will learn how these magnet high schools have sustained success through a focus on five common strategies. Each school innovates for excellence; provides rigorous course work; promotes equity by holding high expectations for all students; builds a culture of high-quality teaching where educators feel connected through an integrated curriculum; and forges partnerships with families, communities, universities, and businesses. This guide is one in a series of Innovations in Education publications produced by the U.S. Department of Education and complements an earlier guide on creating and sustaining K–8 magnet schools. I hope that policy-makers, district and school staff, and parents will find the examples highlighted here as inspiring as I do. These schools have had a powerful impact on the families and communities they serve, and are models for preparing students for successful futures.

**U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education. (2011). *Guidance on the voluntary use of race to achieve diversity and avoid racial isolation in elementary and secondary schools*. Washington, DC: Author.**

The United States Department of Education (ED) and the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) (collectively, the Departments) are issuing this guidance to explain how, consistent with existing law, elementary and secondary schools can voluntarily consider race to further compelling interests in achieving diversity and avoiding racial isolation. This guidance replaces the August 28, 2008 letter issued by ED’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) entitled “The Use of Race in Assigning Students to Elementary and Secondary Schools.”

**Wright, H. K., & Alenuma, S. (2007). *Race, urban schools, and educational reform: The context, utility, pros, and cons of the magnet example*. *Counterpoints*, 306, 211–221.**

Magnet schools are well established and by now quite familiar public yet alternative schools in urban areas. They are high achieving, multicultural, multiracial public yet alternative schools of choice with a specialized curriculum focus (e.g., the creative and performing arts, engineering, languages, and computer science) and/or particularly innovative pedagogical approaches and have the principal dual



focus of improving educational quality and increasing racial integration. But how have magnet schools come about and how have they come to be an integral part of urban education? In this chapter, we discuss magnet programs as a relatively recent educational reform initiative that have been developed and implemented primarily to address a thorny and recurrent problem in urban education, namely racial and economic (re)segregation of schools and consequent educational inequity. We concentrate on contextualizing magnet programs in terms of a rich history of American educational reform, traditions of alternative schools and efforts at desegregating schools and creating educational equity for students irrespective of race, ethnicity, location, and socioeconomic status. Thus, while our discussion is in a sense about educational improvement, we are dealing not merely with a standards based, supposedly "apolitical" conception of educational improvement but with a decidedly progressive conception, one inextricably linked with the historical struggle for diversity, equity and social justice in and through education.