



INSTRUCTION: Special Programs

Magnet Programs

I. Purpose

To implement Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) Policy 6400 by establishing clear guidelines governing the application, admission and enrollment process for magnet programs in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

II. Definitions

As used in this rule, the following definitions will apply:

- A. *Bona Fide Domicile* – The place in which an individual has a settled connection for legal purposes and the place where a person has his/her true, fixed permanent home, habitation and principal establishment without any present intention of leaving. This does not include a temporary residence established for the purpose of free school attendance in the public schools.
- B. *Child* – Any individual who meets all state requirements for enrollment and who is not currently enrolled in a Baltimore County Public School.
- C. *Child of an Employee* – A dependent child of a Board employee. This includes:
 - 1. A biological child;
 - 2. A legally adopted child;
 - 3. A child for whom the employee has legal guardianship; and
 - 4. A stepchild, when the employee’s spouse resides with the employee and the employee’s spouse is the child’s natural or adoptive parent.
- D. *Eligible Applicant* – Any child or student:
 - 1. For whom a completed application was submitted to the Office of Magnet Programs by the application deadline;
 - 2. Who meets requirements for enrollment in Baltimore County Public Schools at the time of application and meets the entry grade-level restrictions for the program(s) selected; and
 - 3. If applying to kindergarten, either:
 - a. Meets the age of entry requirement under Maryland law; or
 - b. Applies concurrently for, and is granted early admission to, kindergarten by the 31st of January following the magnet

application deadline preceding the school year for which admission is sought.

- E. *Employee* – A certificated or non-certificated individual who is employed by the Board for at least 9 months each year and as defined by §6–404 and §6–501 of the Education Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*.
- F. *Filed* – An appeal will be deemed to have been timely filed if, before the expiration of time, it has been:
 - 1. Delivered to the appropriate administrative office; or
 - 2. Deposited in the United States mail, as registered or certified or express mail, or deposited with a delivery service such as Fed Ex, UPS or DHL, that provides verifiable tracking of the item from the point of origin.
- G. *Magnet Programs* – Theme-related curricula and instructional programs that are not available as comprehensive school program options; serve as incubators for innovative instructional practices; draw students across attendance boundaries, in accordance with state-rated capacity; and are accessed through a centralized application and admissions process.
- H. *Parent* – The biological or adoptive parent, legal guardian or person acting in the absence of the parent or guardian.
- I. *Primary Work Site* – The physical location where the employee receives his/her mail and maintains his/her office. For BCPS employees with split work sites, the primary work site means the work location identified by the Department of Human Resources' information system.
- J. *Recruitment* – Activities that encourage parents to apply to magnet programs on behalf of their child. Recruitment efforts may target underrepresented groups of students, but do not create any priority or preference for admission.
- K. *Sibling* – A brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother, stepsister or foster child living in the same household.
- L. *Student* – A school-aged child who meets specified conditions for establishing domicile in Baltimore County and who is currently enrolled in a public school in Baltimore County.

- M. *Terminal Grade* – The last grade before transitioning to middle or high school.
- N. *Zoned School* – The school serving the attendance area where the child resides with his/her parent who has established a bona fide domicile in Baltimore County.

III. Accountability and Standards

- A. The Office of Magnet Programs will:
 - 1. Develop equitable recruitment strategies for magnet programs;
 - 2. Assist in the recruitment of a pool of applicants which reflects the diversity of the school system;
 - 3. Establish the magnet application deadline for each school year;
 - 4. Make magnet applications and brochures available at all BCPS schools, at the Office of Magnet Programs and on the school system’s Web site; and
 - 5. Provide a sufficient number of printed application information materials to each school for distribution to students enrolled in pre-kindergarten, Grade 5 and Grade 8. Each school principal shall be responsible for distributing the magnet application information materials to the parents of students enrolled in his/her school.
- B. Annually, the Director of Educational Options will:
 - 1. Review and approve the admission criteria for each high school magnet program to ensure that they are educationally related to the specialized curriculum or instructional strategy;
 - 2. Review and approve the number of available seats, by grade, for each magnet program for the following year;
 - 3. Assess the extent to which each magnet program’s enrollment reflects the diversity of the school system; and
 - 4. Set recruitment goals for groups that are underrepresented in magnet programs.

IV. Application

- A. The following procedures shall be followed when a student is applying to a magnet program.
- B. Application

1. The parent must submit a completed application to the Office of Magnet Programs by the application deadline.
 - a. An application will be deemed “completed” if the application is filled out in its entirety and signed by the parent of the applicant.
 - b. Incomplete applications will not be processed, and the application will not be considered.
2. Applicants may apply for no more than three (3) magnet program(s).
3. Any change in a program selection must be made by submitting a revised application by the application deadline.

C. Non-BCPS Students

Parents of high school applicants who receive grade reports from a non-BCPS school for any portion of the prior and/or current school year must submit a copy of the report card by the deadline established by the Office of Magnet Programs.

D. New Residents

1. Enrollment in any BCPS magnet program is limited to students who are eligible for enrollment in BCPS as defined in Board of Education Policy and Superintendent’s Rule 5150, *Residents and Nonresidents*. A child who establishes a bona fide domicile in Baltimore County after the application deadline, but before the first day of the school year for which the child seeks enrollment, may submit a letter of interest as outlined in procedures issued by the Office of Magnet Programs.
2. The procedures for the new resident application process, the letter of interest and requisite supporting documentation will be made available to interested parents at the Office of Magnet Programs and on the school system’s Web site.
3. New resident applicants will only be considered for admission when the magnet program selected has available seats remaining.

E. Application Deadlines

1. The application deadline is mandatory, except as outlined in paragraph IV.C.
2. An application will be accepted for consideration if, on or before the application deadline, the application is:
 - a. Deposited in the United States mail, as registered or certified or express mail, or deposited with a delivery service such as

Fed Ex, UPS or DHL, that provides verifiable tracking of the item from the point of origin.

- b. Submitted online by 1:00 p.m. (EST) on the date of the application deadline.
3. Applications will be deemed untimely filed and will not be considered when the application is postmarked after the application deadline, or the application is received after the application deadline without a legible postmark evidencing the date mailed.

F. Application Review

1. All applications will be reviewed by the Office of Magnet Programs to determine the eligibility of each applicant for each program selected.
2. The Office of Magnet Programs will notify parents in writing if the application is incomplete or if the applicant is ineligible for any or all of the programs selected.

V. Qualifications and Admissions Process

A. Elementary and Middle School Programs

1. Qualifications
 - a. The child or student must be an eligible applicant.
 - b. There are no academic or performance criteria for admission to an elementary or middle school magnet program. All eligible applicants are considered for admission.
2. Admissions
 - a. If there are fewer applicants than seats available for an elementary or middle school magnet program, all applicants will be admitted to fill the available seats.
 - b. If the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of seats available, applicants will be offered placement in the following sequence:
 - (1) Priority Placements
Available seats will first be filled with priority placements, as identified in paragraph VI.
 - (2) Random Lottery
A random lottery will be conducted to fill all remaining available seats and to generate a wait list.

B. High School Programs

1. Qualifications

- a. The child or student must be an eligible applicant.
 - b. The applicant must meet the academic and performance admissions criteria identified for each high school magnet program selected.
2. Magnet Assessments
- a. Eligible applicants must attend and complete all required assessments for each magnet program selected.
 - b. Failure to attend the required assessments will disqualify the applicant, and the application for admission into the magnet program will be denied.
3. Appropriate Instruction and Testing Accommodations
- Each eligible applicant with an individualized educational plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan, receiving ESOL services and/or an accommodation plan approved by a private school's learning support coordinator or student support review team that require instruction and/or testing modifications or accommodations will be accommodated as follows:
- a. Current BCPS Students
School-based staff will review and implement the student's documented instruction and testing modifications or accommodations.
 - b. Non-BCPS Students
Applicants who are not currently attending BCPS shall submit documented Instruction and testing modification or accommodation requirements from the school the applicant currently attends with the magnet school application. Upon receipt of the magnet school application and instruction and testing modification or accommodation documentation, the Office of Magnet Programs will coordinate with school-based staff to obtain, review and implement the instruction and testing modifications or accommodations.
4. Admissions
- a. The Office of Magnet Programs will determine which applicants qualify for admission.
 - b. If there are fewer applicants than seats available for a magnet program, all applicants will be admitted to fill the available seats.
 - c. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats, applicants will be offered placement in the following sequence:
 - (1) Priority placements

Available seats will first be filled with priority placements, as outlined in paragraphs VI(B)(2) and VI(C).

- (2) Random Lottery – Score of 80% or higher on admissions criteria

A random lottery of applicants who scored 80% or higher on the admission’s criteria will be conducted to fill available seats and to generate a wait list.

- (3) Random Lottery by Score

- (a) If available seats remain following sequence 1 and 2, a random lottery of applicants who scored 79% on the admissions criteria will be conducted to fill available seats and generate a wait list.

- (b) This lottery process will be repeated in order of descending scores (78%, 77%, 76%, etc.) until all seats have been filled.

VI. Priority Placements

A. Kindergarten Sibling Priority Placements

Kindergarten applicants will receive priority placement in an elementary magnet program when the eligible applicant has an older sibling who is:

1. Currently enrolled in a magnet program in the same elementary school; and
2. Continuing in the magnet program during the year for which the kindergarten applicant is seeking placement.

B. Child of an Employee

When an employee’s primary work site is a school with a magnet program and the employee’s child applies to a magnet program in that school, the child will be given priority placement in the magnet program as follows:

1. For elementary and middle school magnet programs, the child must be an eligible applicant.
2. For high school magnet programs, the child must be an eligible applicant and score 80% or higher on the admissions criteria.

C. High School Program Priority

Up to 20% of the available seats will first be filled by applicants who score 80% or higher on the admissions criteria and who earn the highest scores on the magnet assessment(s).

VII. Notification

- A. The Office of Magnet Programs will provide each applicant written notice of the admission status.
 - 1. Offer of Admission
 - a. If the applicant is offered admission into a magnet program, the parent will be required to accept or decline the offer by a designated deadline.
 - b. Failure by the parent to accept the offer of admission by the designated deadline will result in forfeiture of the seat.
 - 2. Wait List
 - a. A wait list will be generated as a result of the random lottery selection process for each oversubscribed magnet program. The wait list will be maintained by the Office of Magnet Programs until the close of business on the last day of the first marking period; no students will be accepted into a magnet program after this date.
 - b. If a seat becomes available, the parent of the applicant on the wait list will be notified by the Office of Magnet Programs and offered admission to the magnet program.
 - c. The parent of the applicant must accept or decline the offer of admission within three (3) calendar days of the date of the offer.
 - (1) If the last day to accept the offer falls on a Saturday, Sunday or a school system holiday, the period ends on the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or school system holiday.
 - (2) Failure to respond by the deadline will result in forfeiture of the seat, and the offer will be extended to the next applicant on the wait list.

VIII. Special Permission transfer

- A. The parent of an applicant who has accepted an offer of admission into a magnet program that is not in the applicant’s zoned school must complete an *Application for Special Permission Transfer, K-12* and *Student Contract for Special Permission Transfer* (See Superintendent’s Rule 5140).
- B. The guidelines for applying for a special permission transfer are outlined in Superintendent’s Rule 5140, *Special Permission Transfer*.

- C. The parent must submit the completed *Application for Special Permission Transfer, K-12* and *Student Contract for Special Permission Transfer* at the time of registration to the principal of the magnet program to which the student has been accepted for placement. The principal will approve the special transfer request for all students who have been accepted to a magnet program.

IX. Transportation

- A. BCPS provides transportation services during the regular school day to students who reside in the established transportation zone of the magnet program.
 - 1. Transportation to magnet programs is provided from a limited number of pick-up points located at designated school sites.
 - 2. Parents are responsible for providing transportation for their child to and from their designated pick-up point.
- B. For those students who do not reside within the established transportation zone of the magnet program, parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from the magnet program, unless:
 - 1. The student can be accommodated by the existing bus routes and designated pick-up points; and
 - 2. The parent provides transportation for their child to and from the existing pick-up point.
- C. The provisions of this paragraph will not act to limit the entitlement of any student who receives transportation services as a result of IEP accommodations, homelessness or any other program that provides transportation services.

X. Continued Enrollment

- A. Once a student is admitted to a magnet program, the student may remain enrolled in that program until the student reaches the terminal grade level offered by that school, except when the student:
 - 1. Moves out of Baltimore County or fails to meet the requirements for enrollment in accordance with Board of Education policies and Superintendent's rules;
 - 2. Withdraws from BCPS to attend another school, public or private; or
 - 3. Withdraws from the magnet program under which the application was granted.

- B. A parent may withdraw a student from a magnet program and return that student to his/her zoned school at any time. The principal of the zoned school cannot deny the enrollment of the student.

- C. A parent may request that a student be granted a temporary leave from a magnet program.
 - 1. A request for temporary leave from a magnet program must be approved, in writing and in advance of such leave of absence, by the principal of the magnet program.
 - 2. A leave of absence from the magnet program may be considered only under the following conditions:
 - a. If a student moves out of Baltimore County temporarily, that student may be granted a leave of absence for a maximum of one (1) calendar year from the date of withdrawal. Failure of the student to re-enroll in the magnet program after the one (1)-year period will result in automatic withdrawal from the magnet program.
 - b. A student may be granted a leave of absence from the magnet program for medical reasons for the period of time necessary to complete treatment and/or recovery from treatment for any of the following reasons:
 - (1) A stay as a patient in a hospital or medical facility for an extended period of time; or
 - (2) Enrollment in a licensed full-time substance abuse treatment program.
 - 3. Requests, which are based on medical, physical or mental health reasons, must be accompanied by documentation from a physician or mental health provider.

- D. Discipline
 - 1. Students are expected to follow the student code of conduct. Any student who violates the code of conduct is subject to suspension, assignment to an alternative program or expulsion as provided in Board of Education Policy 5550, *Disruptive Behavior*.
 - 2. At the end of the expulsion period, the superintendent's designee, in consultation with the community superintendent, may either return the student to the magnet program from which he/she was expelled or place the student in his/her zoned school or other appropriate placement.

XI. Withdrawal from Program

- A. A student may be withdrawn from a magnet program at the end of the school year if the student fails one or more required courses in a magnet program. Any decision by the principal to withdraw a student from a magnet program because of academic failure in a required course shall be approved in advance by the Office of Magnet Programs.
- B. The principal will provide the student’s parent with a written explanation of the basis for the withdrawal that includes the process for appealing the decision.
- C. A student who is withdrawn from a magnet program shall be enrolled in the student’s zoned school, unless the parent has arranged for admission to another school.

XII. Appeal Process

- A. The parent may appeal admission and withdrawal decisions made under this rule in accordance with this paragraph.
- B. All appeals filed under this paragraph must be made in writing; no electronic transmittals will be accepted.
- C. Appeal to the Director of Educational Options (hereinafter, “director”)
 - 1. Admission or withdraw decisions made under this Rule may be appealed to the director.
 - 2. The appeal must be made in writing and filed with the director **within ten (10) calendar days** of:
 - a. The Office of Magnet Programs’ admission decision; or
 - b. The principal’s decision to withdraw the student from the magnet program.
 - 3. The appeal must include the following:
 - a. The full name, mailing address and telephone number for the person filing the appeal or his/her designated representative;
 - b. A copy of the decision from which the appeal is being taken; and
 - c. A concise statement of the issues presented and the facts about which the person is appealing.
 - 4. The director, or his/her designee, will review the facts of the case and issue a final decision in writing. The director, or his/her designee, will

make every effort to issue a written decision within thirty (30) business days of the receipt of the written appeal.

D. Appeal to the Superintendent

1. If the appeal is denied or the party is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the director, he/she may further appeal that decision by filing an appeal with the superintendent.
2. The appeal must be made in writing and filed with the superintendent **within ten (10) calendar days** of the date of the director's decision.
3. The superintendent, or his/her designee, will review the facts of the case and issue a final decision in writing. The superintendent, or his/her designee, will make every effort to issue a written decision within thirty (30) business days of the receipt of the appeal.

E. Appeal to the Board of Education

1. A decision of the superintendent, or his/her designee, regarding enrollment or withdrawal under this rule may be appealed to the Board of Education of Baltimore County.
2. The appeal must be made in writing and filed with the Board of Education **within thirty (30) calendar days** of the date of the superintendent's decision.
3. The procedures for filing an appeal with the Board of Education are outlined in Board of Education Policy 8340, *Appeal Before the Board of Education*.

F. Enrollment during Appeal Process

If the student is currently enrolled in a magnet program, and the appeal has been timely filed, the student may remain in that magnet program until the earlier of one of the following:

1. The Board has issued its Opinion and Order;
2. All appeals have been exhausted; or
3. The current school year has ended.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article §4-205, *Powers and Duties of County Superintendent*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5110, *Admission*
Board of Education Policy 5140, *School Attendance Areas*

RULE 6400

Board of Education Policy 5150, *Residents and Nonresidents*
Board of Education Policy 5500, *Code of Student Conduct*
Board of Education Policy 5550, *Disruptive Behavior*
Board of Education Policy 6400, *Magnet Programs*
Board of Education Policy 8340, *Appeal Before the Board of
Education*
Board of Education Policy 8341, *Appeal Before a Hearing Examiner*

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