The Civil Rights Project Proyecto Derechos Civiles

A Manual for Local Stakeholders

# CHOICES WORTH MAKING:

## CREATING, SUSTAINING AND EXPANDING DIVERSE MAGNET SCHOOLS

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**Written by:**

Jennifer Ayscue, Rachel Levy, Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, and Brian Woodward

**Production:**

Laurie Russman

**Layout:**

Lauren Gonzalez, Principium Studio



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# PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to support school districts and schools in developing diverse and equitable magnet programs. It is intended to help stakeholders during the planning phases of developing new magnet schools or during the revision or expansion of existing magnet schools. The manual also provides helpful insights into sustaining the success of a magnet school.

Before we begin, we want to acknowledge that the term "magnet school" brings to mind many different kinds of educational settings. Beyond two broad, general characteristics—the provision of something that is educationally unique from what other public schools offer and a diminished reliance on traditional attendance zones—magnet programs have considerably different designs.[1] The sector includes whole-school programs, smaller magnet programs housed within a host school, magnets with competitive or noncompetitive entrance requirements, and magnets with or without racial and/or socioeconomic diversity guidelines. Magnets have also operated in cities across the country for more than four decades, making them one of the oldest forms of school choice. Over long periods of time and across distinctive contexts, diversity goals and programmatic emphases may shift or disappear altogether.

These varying magnet characteristics mean different things for integration. Without regular evaluation and recommitment to equity, magnets can stray their core, historical goal of integration. The contents of this particular manual are designed to help stakeholders think about how to establish, update or expand the most equitable and inclusive magnets possible. Much of the information included here also can help guide efforts to make other types of schools more diverse and equitable.

**Magnet schools represent unique possibilities for bringing together educational stakeholders interested in advancing both school choice and equal educational opportunities.**

Magnet schools represent unique possibilities for bringing together educational stakeholders interested in advancing both school choice and equal educational opportunities. With policymakers across the political spectrum continuing to make the expansion of school choice a central educational policy goal, lessons from magnet schools become even more important to consider. Strong magnets combine diversity goals with excellent educational options to help combat the country's deepening racial and economic school segregation.

This manual starts with empirical evidence intended to help the reader understand why magnet schools, and racially integrated magnet schools in particular, are worthy of consideration. In this section, we describe the research documenting the benefits associated with racial diversity and magnet schools. The next section provides a description of the history of magnet schools, which will help readers understand how and why magnets originated and how they have evolved over time.

We then turn to the important and complex work of developing diverse and equitable magnet schools. In this section, we outline numerous strategies that school districts and schools can employ (1) to enroll a racially diverse student body and (2) to facilitate successful intergroup contact among a racially diverse group of students within the school. In a subsequent section, we outline the keys to sustaining magnet schools. To assist leaders in building support for magnet schools, we include suggestions about how to build political will and engage the community in supporting magnet schools. We conclude by offering the reader additional sources for more information about developing racially diverse and equitable magnet schools.

The contents of this manual are based in part on prior research from many scholars who are referenced throughout. As indicated in the manual, we draw from Genevieve Siegel-Hawley and Erica Frankenberg's chapter entitled "Designing Choice: Magnet School Structures and Racial Diversity," which appeared in the book, *Educational Delusions? Why Choice Can Deepen Inequality and How to Make Schools Fair,* edited by Gary Orfield and Erica Frankenberg.[2] We also incorporate recent research independently conducted by The Civil Rights Project, which included phone interviews with Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) project directors from 24 districts as well as intensive site visits with three racially diverse magnet schools in the West, Northeast and Southeast of the country.[3] ■

# WHY DISTRICTS SHOULD CONSIDER INTENTIONALLY DIVERSE MAGNETS[4]

The U.S. school enrollment is rapidly growing more diverse, heralding new opportunities for schools to promote the kinds of academic, social and civic benefits that are linked to inclusive, diverse environments.[5] In far too many cases, though, students remain in stubbornly segregated schools characterized by multiple layers of isolation. [6]

Carefully designed magnet schools offer one important strategy for bringing diverse groups of students together in schools. As we explain below, magnets are rooted in earlier efforts to promote both school choice and integration. Many magnet schools retain important equity dimensions. These include free transportation so families can get their children to school, extensive and targeted outreach so that families know about the school, desegregation goals to establish intentionality around diversity efforts, and interest-based admissions processes so that families are choosing the school, rather than the other way around.

A good deal of research supports the creation of diverse and equitable magnets—as well as diverse and equitable schools more generally. We review the evidence below.

## Evidence for Intentionally Diverse Magnets[7]

Studies point to important academic gains for children attending magnet schools. In 1996 a professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison published one of the few large-scale, national studies of magnet school effects.[8] It was based on a sample of urban students from the federal National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) and sought to estimate differences in tenth grade achievement for students attending magnet schools, regular public schools, Catholic schools, and secular private schools. The author controlled for an extensive list of family background characteristics in addition to looking at the different types of high schools. Significantly, the analysis showed that magnet schools were more effective in raising student achievement in reading and social studies than regular public, Catholic, or secular private schools. It also found that magnet students made faster achievement gains in most subjects—with the exception of mathematics—than students in other types of schools.

That research supported a major finding from the first evaluation of federally funded magnets. The evaluation found that more than 80% of magnets surveyed had higher average achievement scores than the district average for regular public schools.[9] A follow-up summary of the 1983 evaluation highlighted four school districts where, after controlling for differences in student backgrounds, magnet programs had positive effects on achievement test scores.[10] More recent research based on magnet programs in San Diego found that acceptance to a magnet high school via lottery was

associated with positive gains in math achievement two and three years into the program.[11]

On the other hand, several other studies attempting to control for selection biases (or the idea that students and families who opt into magnets are fundamentally different from those who don't) found no significant differences in student achievement between magnet high schools and comprehensive high schools.[12] A different study, conducted in 2015, of nearly two dozen federally funded magnet schools that had recently converted to magnet status found achievement differences related to the design of the magnet. That is, previously minority segregated schools with high concentrations of poverty that converted to magnets reported achievement gains in English Language Arts (but not in mathematics) while schools converted to magnets in highly resourced neighborhoods reported no change in achievement.[13] Both types of magnets reported some increases in racial or economic diversity.

Connecticut's interdistrict magnet programs offer some of the most current evidence of the link between magnet school attendance and higher academic achievement. As part of its compliance with a statewide desegregation case, Connecticut has established more than fifty interdistrict magnet schools in metropolitan Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury. These schools draw students from multiple districts with the intent of providing racially diverse educational settings. Through a comparison of magnet lottery winners and losers, the researchers found that magnets had positive effects on reading and math scores. Among middle school students, the effects were largest for students at magnet schools with forty percentage points fewer minority students than the regular public schools they would have attended otherwise. Importantly, a second iteration of the study based on the same set of inter-district magnet schools examined outcomes beyond student achievement and found that magnet school students generally reported more positive academic attitudes and behaviors than students in nonmagnet schools.[14]

The "attraction" mechanism at the heart of the magnet concept has also been validated by research. Using a sophisticated econometric analysis that tracked longitudinal outcomes for a magnet program in a midsized urban district, researchers concluded that "magnet programs are effective tools for attracting and retaining households and students."[15] After carefully analyzing the impact of winning or losing school lotteries on families' decisions to stay in or leave a school district, the researchers found that magnet programs retained significant groups of white students from higher-income and more-highly-educated communities. This was one of the major early goals of magnet schools and is important for educational performance, since the retention of more affluent families and high-achieving students has positive influences (e.g. graduation and post-secondary aspirations) on student peer groups.[16] These families also contribute to the economic health of the cities whose magnet programs attract them. The study additionally found that magnet elementary schools reported fewer offenses and suspensions and that high school magnet students had better attendance rates than their nonmagnet peers.[17]

**Magnet programs are effective tools for attracting and retaining households and students.**

By design, magnets offer educational opportunities and experiences outside traditional curricula. At the same time, virtually all magnet school evaluation relies solely on math and reading test scores. If a student becomes fluent in another language, learns how to operate a commercial enterprise, develops a deep understanding of history or government, or learns to sensitively perform a role from Shakespeare, that counts for nothing in traditional assessments. This means that appraisals of the educational effects of magnets ignore the very aspects that make the programs magnetic. As stakeholders think about establishing, revising or extending magnet programs, they should also

consider nuanced evaluation strategies that take into account programmatic emphases.

In sum, most research to date suggests that important benefits are associated with attending magnet schools. More study is needed to fully comprehend academic and nonacademic outcomes for magnet students. Importantly, broader studies of racially diverse schools have generally showed positive academic and social outcomes for students. Well-designed racially diverse learning environments have been linked to enhanced classroom discussion, more advanced social and historical thinking, greater commitment to increasing racial understanding, improved racial and cultural awareness, and higher levels of student persistence.[18] Diverse schools have also been associated with improved academic achievement for black students, accompanied by no decline in scores for white students.[19] Beyond the K–12 schooling experience, diverse school environments eventually translate into loftier educational and career aspirations for students, an enhanced awareness

of the process involved in attaining such goals, and superior social networks.[20] Given that racial diversity has long been an important—and at times guiding—principle for magnet schools, it stands to reason that documentation of the benefits of racially diverse schools may also apply to magnet programs.

## The Background of Magnet Schools[21]

Battles over desegregation policy have been waged since the 1960s, when the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and a series of Supreme Court decisions pushed the federal government actively enforce the landmark 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision. One of the major federal legislative efforts to facilitate desegregation came with the enactment of the Emergency School Aid Act in 1972, a bipartisan measure which gave substantial funding to help ease and improve the integration process for districts wishing to participate. The magnet school program was an essential component of the legislation, passed through the Magnet Schools Assistance Act.

The Act grew out the situation created for central city school districts outside the South by two major Supreme Court decisions in 1973 and 1974. *The first, Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1,* provided a legal framework for winning school desegregation orders in non-southern school systems by defining the evidence necessary to prove intentional segregation. The very next year, another Supreme Court decision, *Milliken v. Bradley* made it almost impossible to desegregate across city-suburban boundary lines even when there was no workable remedy within a city. That meant that cities under court orders were incentivized to seek ways to accomplish desegregation in part by improving troubled urban systems and retaining middle class residents who might otherwise be lost to the suburbs. Since virtually every city sued by a civil rights group was found guilty and ordered to implement a desegregation plan, a great number turned to magnet schools.

Magnet schools flowed from the efforts of major urban school districts, including Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and Buffalo, to create positive solutions under difficult circumstances. The federally-funded Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), whose leading sponsors were Senators from New York and Ohio, facilitated choice-based desegregation in many communities and enjoyed eager applications until the larger statute was terminated in President Ronald Reagan's 1981 budget legislation. Still, progressive magnet supporters have long been joined by many conservatives, including President Reagan himself. Magnets bring together those who support choice to further diversity and equity, along with

those who tout the market-based implications of offering alternatives to traditional public schools.[22] That tradition endures: during the 2016 presidential campaign, President Trump spoke admiringly about school choice and magnet schools.[23] Modest federal magnet school funding has continued though many successive administrations, even as they have been divided along attitudes and requirements for desegregation.

Magnet schools have rapidly multiplied. In the early 1990s more than 232 school districts contained magnet schools. A decade, later the U.S. Department of Education (ED) estimated that more than half of all large urban school systems had used or continued to use magnets as a tool for desegregation.[24] Today, there are roughly 3,000 magnets spread across 600 districts around the country.

Amid that growth, a string of court rulings in the 1990s, some of which dealt specifically with the desegregation goals governing magnet schools, weakened or ended desegregation efforts in many places.[25] Following these judicial decisions, the machinery—namely, intentional desegregation goals and accountability for meeting those goals—created in some communities to assure substantial desegregation was pulled apart and civil rights policies were often abandoned. When this happened, resegregation was severe since there was usually no set of policies and standards to reinforce desegregation. Many magnets became a form of choice detached from their original purpose of desegregation.[26] With changing desegregation goals and constraints by court rulings and the standards and accountability movement, magnets experienced increased pressure to raise students' academic performance. Indeed, federally funded magnet programs were expected to serve as beacons of innovation, reform, or high academic standards, in addition to preventing racial isolation.[27]

Evaluations of federally funded magnet schools (which are just a subset of all magnets) indicate that the shifting purpose of these magnet schools has been related to progress on desegregation outcomes. The first federal report, released in 1983, found that more than 60% of the magnets studied were "fully desegregated," with the remainder reporting substantial racial and ethnic diversity.[28] Subsequent reviews occurred after the Supreme Court authorized the termination of desegregation plans in the 1990s. The next evaluation, published in 1996, found less encouraging results: only 42% of federally funded magnet programs were operating under obvious desegregation guidelines.[29] And last, the most recent magnet study, issued in 2003, found that 57% of newly founded magnet programs were making progress in combating racial isolation, while another 43% were experiencing an increase in segregation.[30] It explicitly cited the use of race-neutral admissions criteria as a possible explanation for the fact more than two-fifths of 1998 MSAP awardees reporting rising levels of racial isolation.[31]

**Today, there are roughly 3,000 magnets spread across 600 districts around the country.**

Taken together, these federal evaluations reinforce two key points: (1) magnet programs by no means guarantee diverse schooling and in some cases may provide just the opposite; and (2) many magnets have been established without explicit goals for desegregation. In the years since the last federal evaluation of magnet programs, the Supreme Court's 2007 *Parents Involved* decision has created additional obstacles to using race to produce diverse magnet schools under voluntary integration policies although the Supreme Court recognized the compelling interest in school integration. The *Parents Involved* decision prohibited the assignment of individual students on the basis of race; however, almost any other criterion, such as home language, can be used. In districts that remain under a desegregation plan or court order, race still can be used as part of the remedy.

Stakeholders interested in creating, strengthening or expanding magnet schools should study this history carefully, as it suggests that the design and focus of magnet school policy is very much related to whether or not magnets foster diverse and equitable school choice. ■

# DEVELOPING A DIVERSE AND EQUITABLE MAGNET SCHOOL

In this section, we summarize what research has found about the important and complex work of developing diverse and equitable magnet schools. A diverse and equitable magnet school must focus on "first door" efforts to ensure that a diverse group of students walk through the front door of a school together, as well as "second door" efforts that facilitate equal status contact[32] among a racially diverse group of students walking through classroom doors together.

## First Door Strategies to Enroll a Diverse Student Body

The following mechanisms are important for first-door efforts to attract a diverse student body: attractive and relevant themes, outreach, free and accessible transportation, inter-district choice, site selection, and lottery-based admissions.

### *Attractive and relevant themes.*

In planning for a diverse magnet school, it is essential to begin by selecting an attractive and relevant theme. Strong, compelling magnet themes draw families to the school. If there is the opportunity to persist through a pipeline of schools with similar themes, or if a magnet program begins with pre-school grades, families stay on board over long periods of time.

To determine which themes will be attractive and will meet the needs and desires of the community, magnet leaders often engage in conversations with parents, students, educators, and community members. They can examine family demand for existing magnet themes or programs in local or similar communities to gauge their level of attractiveness. Community surveys are another way to gauge interest in possible themes. A district magnet coordinator in a Western school district emphasized the importance of the theme for attracting families across different parts of the district, "It's hard to get people to come from the suburbs to the center of the city, although some of our schools have strong enough themes and programs and selection of offerings that students will do that." Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM), and dual-language immersion themes were particularly popular among the last two cycles of federally funded magnet schools.

### *Outreach.*

Even with the most compelling theme, if families aren't aware of a magnet school opportunity they can't choose it for their child. Conducting outreach and disseminating information to a wide range of families is a critical component of recruiting a diverse student body. School or district magnet coordinators can head up outreach efforts, as well as professional marketing firms. Having a point person overseeing and coordinating outreach efforts is very effective. Establishing a parent information center also can be helpful for consolidating information in one location so that parents don't have to navigate multiple different pathways of information. A parent

information center could brief all newcomers about their choices as they enter the district. This type of center needs to be accessible to parents during the school day as well as after school and in the evenings when parent/guardian time is more flexible. How information is disseminated as well as the content of the information are both important considerations.

Outreach is most effective when it is paper- and web-based and when it is accompanied by hands-on assistance to navigate the information.[33] Magnet directors suggest that information can be shared widely through advertisements in community magazines, radio, television, billboards, and promotional videos for websites. More targeted information can be sent through text messages, phone calls, and post cards. Social media has become increasingly important in marketing campaigns. A district leader explains, "Twitter and Facebook have been huge for us.… We have changed our marketing to reflect the changing population and changing social media and technology—people like texts, for example." Some magnet coordinators also suggest meeting with realtors to educate them about magnet school options, ensuring they understand that magnet schools are options outside of traditional neighborhood schools and often are not bound by neighborhood attendance zones. Highlighting how essential marketing and outreach is, a district leader from the Southeast described the range of promotional activities for her district, "We do robocalls, newsletters, billboards, magazine advertisements.… We've done everything but skywriting."

The type of information that is provided to families also matters. It is helpful if the information provided is multidimensional.[34] That is, magnets should provide parents with information about the theme, achievement, and diversity. Consistently emphasizing the educational and social value of diverse schools is important for generating and sustaining interest in magnets.[35]

Making the information accessible to a diverse set of families is obviously critical. Providing all of the information in multiple languages helps ensure that a range of families can access it. Magnet

directors also suggest that being proactive and going out into the community to interact with families in places that are easily accessible to them is more effective than waiting for families to seek out information from district officials. Flexibility regarding the time of day when outreach to families is occurring is key so that families with different work schedules are available to receive information. A district magnet leader in the Southwest described a shift in the district's approach, "In previous years, we had one big open house and parents were invited to attend. To remove barriers, we extended our window and had four open houses in every sector of the city and all school representatives were invited to learn about the application process and share that with their communities. We also come to the families with regional school fairs." Many district leaders also plan informational sessions at feeder schools (if they exist) and invite families to tour the magnet school.

**Magnet directors contend that the provision of transportation is key to creating a diverse magnet school.**

In addition to marketing and outreach about the magnet school, having an easy to access—and navigate—application process is essential. To facilitate this process, many district magnet leaders emphasize the importance of allowing families to complete an online or a paper application. It is important to be cognizant of the digital divide and to analyze which populations are not applying as a means of targeted outreach. A magnet director in a Southeastern district explained, "Most applications are done online, but from some areas, we see a lot of paper applications so we send information and applications by mail to those areas." Other districts allow families to take a picture of their completed paper application and text it to the admissions coordinator.

### *Free and accessible transportation.*

Providing families with free and accessible transportation to support desegregation is critical. Without free and accessible transportation, magnet schools are only a realistic option for those families who have the resources and flexibility to provide their children with transportation (often middle- to upper-class families).

Magnet directors contend that the provision of transportation is key to creating a diverse magnet school. A Southwestern district magnet coordinator emphasized the importance of transportation, "The district funds transportation. I've seen other districts nationally that go through budget cuts and cut transportation and that affects MGI [minority group isolation]. Our district is committed to transportation. The school doesn't incur the cost; the families don't incur the cost. If they're more than two miles from the school, they get transportation." In contrast, in a Western district that does not provide transportation the magnet coordinator reflected, "We have very limited transportation. I think I've seen five buses ever. It's definitely a district where students go to the school that they're living next to. We do not provide transportation to magnet schools or charters. In 2010, one of our schools was a reverse-magnet, which is very demographically white. We were hoping to have that magnet draw students from minority schools but without transportation that was very difficult to do."

Providing transportation can be financially and logistically challenging, particularly in large cities where long bus rides could be a deterrent to enrolling in a magnet school. In such instances, magnet directors are creative in developing transportation plans. For example, several community school districts in an urban, Northeastern district as well as in a Southeastern district provided access to public transportation. One Northeastern district magnet leader explained, "We also offer [subway] passes. We are in [a major urban center] so most people use public transportation. Transportation is a contributing factor to reducing MGI (minority group isolation)… We could maintain sustainability and reduce minority group isolation because of public transportation. All of the schools in [this district] are accessible to public transportation and all of the schools are accessible to

the same train line." The Southeastern district also established centralized hubs (e.g., a regular public school in the district) where students meet and from there are provided with transportation to the magnet schools.

### *Inter-district choice.*

Today, the vast majority of school segregation across the country occurs because students attend schools in separate school districts.[36] In many districts, little racial or socioeconomic diversity exists in the student enrollment. Thus, while segregation can occur among schools within a single school district, it occurs to an even greater extent because students are enrolled in different school districts with substantial variations in racial composition. Meaningful efforts to address racial segregation, particularly in central cities, should involve multiple school districts.

The most well-known set of inter-district magnet schools has been created as a result of a Connecticut court case, *Sheff v. O'Neill.* Connecticut's magnets are associated with academic and social improvements for students of all races. In a Southwest community, inter-district students helped the magnet enroll a more diverse study body, "This program was developed to be regional and be opened to multiple districts and so we have students from all backgrounds and all walks of life.… It's an inter-district program with ten districts total, including [our district].… Enrollment with neighboring districts helps with MGI."[37] While inter-district magnet programs require more collaboration and negotiation, they have resulted in desegregation, academic achievement, and high demand.

### *Promising locations for magnet schools.*

Selecting a school site is an important consideration for integration efforts.[38] With their ability to draw students across catchment areas and school district boundaries, choice schools like magnets present real possibilities for creating diverse schools divorced from persistent neighborhood segregation. Where to establish a magnet is still a key question, however, as proximity to schools plays a role in family decision-making processes. Workplace magnets near employment or transportation centers, especially when combined with after school care,

represent a way to capitalize on the centrality of location to family choices—with work, not home, as the point of proximity.

Recognizing the importance of a school's location, about three-quarters of magnet directors in the last two grant cycles emphasized the need to be deliberate about where magnet programs are located. In a Midwestern district, school leaders sought "to magnetize the three schools with the most concentrated poverty." By turning these schools into magnets, districts hope to create more racially and socioeconomically diverse settings than would have otherwise existed. This is traditionally how magnets have been sited, in neighborhoods of highly concentrated poverty and nonwhite segregation. One can imagine, though, school leaders being strategic about the proximity of magnets to racially changing or gentrifying neighborhoods in cities, as well as to diversifying neighborhoods in suburbia. Still other communities have created "destination magnets" by providing space for disadvantaged students in more highly resourced schools.[39] Deliberate site selection can also be important for inter-district magnets. Thinking about locating magnet schools near the border of a city and suburban school system or near the border of an inner suburb with a nonwhite population and an outer ring suburb with predominately white population represents the beginning of a metropolitan strategy for promoting diverse and equitable schools. Consideration of current as well as projected demographics is key.

A growing number of schools of choice, including magnets, are strengthening the tie between the school and the residential area in which the school is located by reserving a portion of seats for students in the neighborhood surrounding the school.[40] For example, in a Western district,

"the students [who live] around the school are able to attend the school and then we use the lottery." However, if the neighborhood is comprised of residents who are predominantly one race, this approach can inhibit the magnet's ability to create a diverse school. Unless the neighborhood itself is diverse, using a neighborhood preference could come into conflict with diversity goals.[41] If such a neighborhood preference will be part of a magnet school or program, district leaders might well determine that placement in a one-race neighborhood is not advisable.

***Lotteries.***

When demand for magnet schools exceeds the number of available seats, some form of selection process must occur. Rather than using competitive admissions criteria, such as tests or grade point averages, almost all of the federally funded magnet schools from the last two cycles (again, just a small subset of magnets nationwide), used a lottery.[42] This is likely related to a competitive funding priority for magnets that use lotteries.[43] The use of competitive admissions criteria creates serious concerns about access and equity as these criteria often serve as barriers to students of color, low-income students, and English learners.[44] Thus, the use of a lottery as opposed to competitive admissions criteria is preferable for creating desegregation and equity.

Lotteries can be designed in different ways, which relates differently to how much diversity is achieved. Some districts use a purely random lottery while others use a weighted lottery. When using a purely random lottery, the ability to create a diverse school depends on how diverse the applicant pool is (which, in turn, is related to the strength of the theme and the outreach and marketing campaign). A weighted lottery, on the other hand, can be used to encourage the likelihood of a diverse outcome. The use of weighted lotteries is legally permissible.[45]

To create a weighted lottery, the district or school might assign weights to students who have siblings attending the school or to children who live near the school building. In these cases, the weights will do little to promote diversity and in fact might impede integration efforts by replicating the existing student population or the neighborhood population (both of which may be segregated). However, in other cases, the district might assign weights to students who are low-income, students who come from a geographic area of the district in which there is a large share of students of color, or students who are currently enrolled in low-performing schools. If the school needs to attract more highly resourced students, the weights might work in the opposite direction. Each of these types of weights would encourage desegregation by considering demographic features of students, their neighborhoods, or their schools in the admissions process.

**Competitive admissions criteria often serve as barriers to students of color, low-income students and English learners.**

While it is not legally permissible to use the race of an individual student in making a voluntary student assignment decision, such as a weight for a magnet lottery, it is permissible to use the racial composition of a student's neighborhood or school.[46] For federal magnet school grantees in the 2010 and 2013 cycles, the most commonly used diversity weights were based on socioeconomic status (SES). Specific SES weights included free and reduced priced lunch eligibility, attendance at a Title I school, the FRL-makeup of the sending school, family or guardian income, parental educational attainment, and, in one instance, and whether or not applicants attended pre-school. About one-quarter of 2010 MSAP grantees also reported using geography and school performance (e.g., test scores) weights. Key elements for successfully weighted lotteries include the presence of diversity goals based on the landscape surrounding the school and ensuring that the weights are flexible and coupled with strong recruitment.[47]

# MAGNET SCHOOLS THAT USE COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA: THE CASE OF BUFFALO

Magnet schools that use competitive admissions criteria comprise a small but highly visible subgroup of magnet schools. In this type of magnet, it is important to consider the potential impact of admissions criteria on desegregation efforts. A recent study of competitive admissions magnet schools in Buffalo, New York demonstrates the need for intentional efforts to support equity, access, and diversity.[48] After intensively examining Buffalo's criteria school system, Civil Rights Project researchers identified ways to expand equity and access in the recruitment, application, and enrollment process of competitive admissions choice schools. In addition to the strategies described throughout this manual, researchers highlighted the need for competitive admissions magnet schools to consider the likely effect on desegregation of different admissions criteria, such as cognitive skills (IQ) tests, state end-of-grade tests, grades, parent recommendations, and teacher recommendations.

In general, the use of high-stakes tests can undermine desegregation efforts. One mechanism through which this occurs is stereotype threat. Stereotype threat happens when individuals experience anxiety about confirming negative stereotypes about their social group. It often results in a lowered academic performance of individuals who belong to the negatively stereotyped group.[49] Therefore, overreliance on tests could jeopardize access to competitive admissions magnet schools for students of color, low-income students, and English learners (ELs).

In Buffalo, the use of a cognitive skills test as well as state end-of-grade tests were barriers to diversity in competitive admissions schools. Cognitive skills tests are often a reflection of students' knowledge, not their abilities; knowledge is influenced by environmental factors and all students do not have equal access to the knowledge that is assessed on standard IQ tests.[50] As a result, the use of a cognitive skills test can unfairly prevent students of color and low-income students, who often face barriers to accessing the knowledge assessed on such tests, from admission to a competitive magnet school.

In addition to the use of a cognitive skills test, the way in which it, or any other test, is administered is also important. In Buffalo, the cognitive skills test was offered on a Saturday without transportation. For students who can't provide their own transportation or who don't have knowledge about the test administration, this approach is problematic.

Universal screening of students during the school day at their home school sites would be more equitable.

Overreliance on standardized end-of-grade tests can also be a concern for magnets trying to create desegregation. In Buffalo, based on guidance offered by the New York Common Core Task Force,[51] we recommended eliminating the use of the Common Core-aligned tests as admissions criteria. The tests were too new and the reliability and validity of the tests was not yet established for the purpose of evaluating individual students. We suggested that students' grades be weighted with twice as much importance as students' test scores based on evidence from higher education that grades are a better predictor for academic success than are test scores.[52]

To facilitate enrollment of a diverse student body, it is helpful to consider criteria holistically rather than in isolation and to maintain flexible thresholds for the criteria. In line with the 2011 guidance from OCR,[53] we recommended that in Buffalo, 10 percent of seats in each competitive admissions school be set aside for the holistic consideration of students who are deserving of special consideration. That consideration should extend to factors such as obstacles overcome, exceptional dedication, unusual success in a school isolated by race and poverty, or coming from a section of the city that is rarely represented in the competitive schools of choice.

Although not part of the original recommendations for Buffalo's criteria schools, the team of researchers offers a word of caution about teacher and parent recommendations. Along with testing, the use of teacher and parent recommendations as admissions criteria to competitive schools of choice could create barriers for students of color, low-income students, and ELs. Due to the subjective and sometimes complex and cumbersome nature of a parent recommendations,[54] such recommendations are not very reliable and we would recommend eliminating this requirement altogether. Recently released research finds that teacher biases influence gifted and talented recommendations from teachers; in particular, black students are referred to gifted programs at significantly lower rates when they are taught by non-black teachers.[55] Therefore, we suggest that competitive admissions magnet schools de-emphasize the weight given to recommendations provided by teachers.

**Holistic admissions alongside diversity guidelines and strong outreach will help competitive admissions magnet schools foster diversity.**

Competitive admissions magnet schools must carefully consider the likely impact that various admissions criteria will have on desegregation efforts as described above. A holistic approach to admissions criteria alongside diversity guidelines and strong outreach will help competitive admissions magnet schools foster diversity. ■

## Second Door Strategies to Facilitate Successful Integration of Diverse Student Groups

Having enrolled a diverse student body, it is also imperative that magnet schools implement second-door efforts to facilitate positive and successful experiences within the school. In 1954, a Harvard social-psychologist named Gordon Allport developed the intergroup contact theory, which offers a framework for understanding the elements magnet schools need to address in order to be equitable and inclusive. Researchers have confirmed Allport's theory across hundreds of studies worldwide.[56] Allport theorized that the following four conditions help maximize the benefits of contact between different groups:

- frequent contact between groups,
- equal status between groups,
- cooperative environments that offer opportunities for different groups to work toward shared goals, and
- strong leadership visibly supportive of equitable contact between groups.

In schools, these conditions can be created through detracked (i.e., classes that are not sorted into homogeneous groups based on academic ability), intentionally diverse classrooms, an inclusive curriculum, and collaborative or cooperative interactions through project-based learning them.[57] Schools also need principals, teachers, and staff who model and expect positive interactions between students of different races and who work to address racial disparities in special education and disciplinary processes.[58]

The following mechanisms are important for second-door efforts to facilitate positive inter-group contact among a racially diverse group of students within the school: structure, leadership, developing teacher buy-in, developing teacher and staff diversity, creating diverse classrooms, providing rigorous instruction that supports positive interactions across groups, developing relationships and a sense of community, and engaging families and the community.

**Leaders who develop a collaborative and supportive atmosphere contribute to the magnet's success.**

### *Structure.*

Magnet programs tend to follow one of two structures. Some are established as schools unto themselves, and districts tend to assign these programs their own school campuses. Schools such as these are often referred to as "whole-school magnets." The second type resides within a traditional school. Some students attend the magnet program with a special theme, while others go to the same school for non-themed education. This can be referred to as "a school-within-a-school magnet." School-within-a-school magnets are less likely to produce substantial or increasing integration, according to a 2008 survey of over 200 magnet school stakeholders affiliated with the Magnet Schools of America. That conclusion is supported by data from the federal Schools and Staffing Survey.[59] An additional obstacle for school-within-a-school magnets involves tension that can ensure if students in the magnet program benefit from additional resources. Marked differences in the racial composition of magnet and non-magnet students, coupled with a lack of meaningful contact between those students may also reinforce or exacerbate stereotyping and prejudice. All of this suggests that stakeholders interested in furthering equity and diversity through choice should prioritize the creation or expansion of whole-school magnets.

### *Leadership.*

Strong leadership at both the district and school level is important. A magnet leader from a Southern district highlighted the importance of multi-level leadership, "It just takes a concerted effort by all parties. We have a strong board—it's still there—that's the reason that the district is still diverse. We have a very good school board, educated, that really tries to think about what's best for the student population and the community. There were lots of community meetings to keep communication [open].

It was a combination of a good school board, good superintendent, and handpicking good leaders. Strong leader chooses strong teachers. It was a group effort."

In particular, district magnet leaders spoke to the centrality of the principal's role, especially his or her commitment to the magnet concept and theme. A Northeastern leader reflected, "We've had some really excellent principals who did not hesitate to buy into what a magnet school is supposed to be.… The superintendents in both districts also really bought into what a magnet school is and what it means to be a magnet school." Similarly, a magnet leader from a Midwestern district emphasized the influential role of magnet principals, "Our principals—they just embraced the magnet themes, the open houses, the phone calls, the magnet fairs. We have a welcome center that families who are new to the district can come to and learn about their choices. But ultimately, it's the principals." A Western district magnet coordinator concurred, "One of the biggest influences is the building principal.… My experience has shown that they're the ones that show that parent outreach and community outreach. They have the ability to go above and beyond the regular district standard and move that school in a way that the other schools are not moving."

Leaders who develop a collaborative and supportive atmosphere contribute to the magnet's success. Teachers from one magnet underscore the importance of "having someone that understands the magnet process but also that supports the theme and can proactively plan around the supports and professional learning…[It] would have been impossible without someone…who supported the teachers. He drove people really hard, celebrated the successes along the way, and was really present to the task at hand. Even when you felt overworked and exhausted, you felt supported." To create this environment, the former principal suggested becoming a learner with the teachers and continuously soliciting input from teachers regarding the school's current needs and future plans.

### *Developing teacher buy in.*

Alongside the principal, teachers are crucial to the success of magnet schools. In particular, teachers are the focal points for implementing rigorous, inclusive

instruction and facilitating positive interactions across racially diverse groups of students. Developing teacher capacity and ensuring that teachers are on board with the magnet concept—the theme and the importance of integration—are essential. Magnets often require that teachers go above and beyond the norm to develop skills and knowledge related to the theme. For example, a Southeastern magnet administrator attributes much of the school's success to, "teachers creating these authentic learning experiences and sort of going off the grid and not necessarily using all of the materials that are provided by the district. So, it takes a lot of extra work. I think the most influential piece is having teachers that are hardworking."

When converting an existing school into a magnet school, it can be challenging to get existing teachers on board with a new magnet program. Because of the change, at two of the three magnets we studied in depth, some teachers decided to leave when the school became a magnet. The former principal at a Western magnet recalls the challenge of "working with people who were a little leery of that [the magnet]. They also had the opportunity to leave if they wanted to and a couple of people did because they said, 'This isn't me.'" Similarly, the former principal at a Northeastern magnet explained, "Many of the teachers decided to leave…there was no doubt a message that it's time to roll up your sleeves. I'm going to ask you to do some things differently and

work harder." For the teachers who remained, the former principal recalls, "We would butt heads with the older teachers. They had things they were really good at… I drew the line in the sand. I expanded capacity through coaching. It was a tough journey. I wasn't sure where they were with me at times. I never felt that way before. There was vulnerability that they were being asked to do things that they didn't know how to do." With a theme centered around technology, an assistant principal at a Western magnet recalls the training necessary to ensure that teachers were equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to use Netbooks for instruction in meaningful ways. Alternatively, a Southeastern magnet had district approval to do a complete rehire resulting in a brand new teaching staff. It can be very important for magnet schools to select faculty who are interested in the theme and who are open to receiving appropriate training. Magnets that rely on seniority-based faculty assignments can face challenges with buy in.

**Part of creating a successfully diverse environment is being able to talk openly about issues of race and culture.**

It is also critical to get teachers and staff members to actively promote the other main component of a magnet school—integration. Part of creating a successfully diverse environment is being able to talk openly about issues that may arise out of diversity of background and thought. Magnet teachers and staff members report varying levels of comfort with discussing race-related issues. Just over one-third of the teachers at the three magnets we studied intensively strongly agreed that the staff feels comfortable discussing race and culture with students. A teacher from a Northeastern magnet commented that "an increase in professional development for newer teachers would be helpful so they would feel more comfortable having more experiences talking about race.… More training would help me feel more comfortable and have easier conversations." With regard to discussing and addressing race-related issues, an assistant principal from a Western magnet also recognized the broad range of comfort and skill that adults in the building possess. "There's different levels of comfort. I know my teachers that could handle cultural proficiency issues masterfully. And I know other teachers that don't even realize they have cultural proficiency problems because they're sending that kid out because he's a bad kid. They just…they just don't get it." A teacher from the same school concurs, "I definitely feel like we do need to have more discourse as a staff." Teachers and leaders from a Southeastern magnet generally adopted a colorblind perspective. However, such an approach can be problematic because it prevents people from acknowledging, discussing, and addressing race-related issues. Less than one quarter of teachers at the three magnets we examined in-depth reported that they had received a lot of training on facilitating discussions about race in the classroom, making additional professional development important.

### *Developing teacher and staff diversity.*

Although it can be difficult to achieve, obtaining a diverse teaching staff is essential. Racially diverse teaching staffs are better positioned to reach a broad array of students' learning styles, communicate with families of different backgrounds, offer leadership reflecting the importance of positive cross-racial relationships, and serve as role models for different students.[60] Recent research demonstrates a link between teachers' race and their perceptions of student performance. Evidence suggests that teachers are more apt to negatively perceive other-race students than students of their same race, a finding that holds for white and nonwhite students alike.[61] Having a same-race teacher, in other words, helps protect against biased and stereotyped expectations and treatment for students.

Similar to schools across the United States, the teaching staff at all three of the magnet schools we studied extensively was predominately white. Research shows that the magnet teaching force is overall more diverse than the teaching force in regular public schools.[62] As the example of the three

schools indicates, though, greater diversity is still needed in magnet teaching staffs.

### *Creating diverse classrooms.*

Enrolling a diverse student body at the school level does not automatically translate into having diverse classrooms. Thus, efforts to support diverse and heterogeneous groupings of students are needed. Elementary teachers at a Southeastern and Northeastern magnet are aware of diversity along many dimensions when creating class lists and when assigning students to work in groups within the classroom. A Southeastern administrator emphasizes, "They put a lot of effort and thought into what the classes look like for diversity." The teachers at a Northeastern magnet school explain, "When we formulate our classrooms, the criteria are balanced with 50% magnet and 50% non-magnet students." Then within their classrooms, 70-80% of magnet teachers regularly assign students to work in diverse small groups.

Moreover, identifying a diverse group of students for advanced courses or gifted and talented programs is important. While each of the three magnets we studied in depth were attuned to the need to have diverse classes and student groups, racial disparities remained between gifted and talented and non-gifted and talented students at the elementary level as well as between academic tracks at the middle school level. At all three schools we visited, teachers and leaders voiced concerns about the smaller shares of students of color who are identified as gifted and identified it as an area for improvement. An assistant principal at a Western magnet said, "I get that the purpose of this particular grant [MSAP] was to desegregate the school, which happened. But then the bigger conversation now is, 'How do we desegregate within classes? And how do we get some of the strong teachers to also impact those particular kids? Because if they're teaching GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) all day, then some of my kids who this program was supposed to support, are still getting the same that they got before." Careful attention to this concern from the outset is needed in order to create a magnet school that is equitable and diverse.

To address this challenge, the three magnet schools we studied in depth have begun to make concerted efforts to be inclusive in gifted education. At the middle school level, teachers from a Southeastern magnet did not rely solely on test scores to place students in gifted classes. A counselor from the Western middle school magnet meets with fifth grade counselors to learn about incoming students and does not place them strictly according to gifted identification. A Southeastern magnet teacher describes, "Our GATE population is not entirely GATE. We do actually integrate but it's the higher level kids. For example, in my first period—I teach all GATE classes—it's probably half GATE and half regular. There's lots of diversity.… Since I've taught here, we've always given the chance to non-GATE students who are high achieving on tests and in their grades to be bumped up. So, there is that diversity even in GATE. It's not strictly based on the GATE test they took in elementary school."

Using a different approach, magnet teachers sometimes combine gifted and non-gifted classes so they can work together. For example, a Southeastern magnet teacher explains, "Last year at one point, I had a GATE class and she had general ed class, so we would combine them. Then it was opposite in the next period. She had GATE and I had general ed, so we had them interacting. We divided our classes so they were still having that meaningful connection with each other through discussion."

Though not in evidence at the three schools we visited, other schools and systems have sought to de-track courses so that all students receive access to the same high-level curriculum. Additional supports, differentiated instruction, a strong rationale and thoughtful phase-in can help smooth the way for this kind of shift.

### *Providing rigorous instruction that encourages positive interactions across groups.*

As Allport's theory suggests, instructional approaches that encourage positive and cooperative interaction across group are key to the success of diverse magnet schools. The three magnets we studied in depth accomplish this goal by using project-based learning or inquiry-based learning. An assistant principal from a Western magnet suggests project-based learning as a way for students to "practice critical thinking skills, collaborate with each other. Students are engaged in school, have a positive relationship with their teacher and care about what they're doing." She continues, "When you focus on project-based learning, you are in turn going to be increasing test scores because your student engagement is up." For example, a makerspace classroom at a Western magnet provides students with authentic opportunities to engage in project-based learning. The makerspace teacher offers the following testament about the benefits of this approach, "There's a guy who's maybe even struggling in school, or struggling with reading, struggling with mathematics, but he can solder a circuit board better than anybody else. Now everybody needs him because they all want their drones to fly. He has something of value. He has a reason now to work with other kids and he no longer feels like an outsider. To me that changes the whole dynamic. Or if the kid comes in, and it's the first time he has—you know, nobody seen a CNC router before, and no one has used the software. And the kid who is a little bit tech savvy but maybe struggling in other academic areas, somebody goes, 'Hey, did you know that we can actually do in-lays with this app right here?' Suddenly he's a hero in the classroom. Typically, he's not the hero in the classroom. That changes everything, that dynamic."

At all three schools we looked at, over three-fourths of teachers report regularly engaging students in problem solving activities that require critical thinking. Other evidence-based strategies magnet teachers used to provide rigorous instruction for diverse learners included the following: regularly assigning collaborative group projects, encouraging students to study multiple points of view, connecting new concepts and skills to students' life experiences, and including stories and content about diverse cultures.

### *Developing relationships and a sense of community.*

Supporting students' academic needs as well as fostering meaningful relationships between students and adults in the school is important for developing a sense of belonging and caring. All of these dimensions impact the magnet's ability to attract and retain students and positively impact academic outcomes. Since most students opt in to magnet schools, maintaining student and family satisfaction with magnets becomes a consideration. Magnets adopt a variety of approaches to support these efforts, including responsive classrooms at the elementary level and advisory periods at the middle school level. At a Northeastern magnet middle school, a student survey sent out by the administration revealed that a very low share of students believed that more than one adult in the school knew their name. In response, the school developed the advisory period as a time when students could set academic goals, discuss concerns, and develop character skills. A teacher at the school reports that the advisory period has "made data [on feeling connected to the school] skyrocket." Cultivating less formal opportunities to get to know students as individuals can be helpful too. For example, a Western principal stands in the courtyard every day during nutrition break, greets all the students by name, and discusses how their days are going with them. A parent at this school commented, "The one thing that impressed me the first year was that the principal could stand out on the field out here and know everybody by name."

Alongside these approaches focused on community building, teachers and leaders indicate that project-based learning and student-

centered approaches to instruction also strengthen relationships. A Western magnet parent described, "These are very hands-on classes. They make things. They build things. The teachers are just all a part of it with the students and make such a great relationship and they have such a good rapport with the kids." Similarly, a Northeastern magnet has created a weekly enrichment period during which the teachers cycle through 8-week sessions on a topic of their own interest. Creative scheduling offers time to engage in these approaches. At a Southeastern magnet, block scheduling for middle school students provided teachers more time with students and made project-based learning more feasible. At the Northeastern magnet, a special Friday schedule allowed for a weekly advisory period and enrichment activities.

Finally, the use of behavior management systems and disciplinary procedures conducive to building an inclusive community are essential for developing support and relationships. Research from the desegregation era indicates that guarding against racially disproportionate, exclusionary discipline is a crucial concern for newly diversifying schools.[63] Programs like Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) at a Northeastern magnet and restorative justice at a Western magnet are helpful for focusing more on developing responsible students and for building community as opposed to zero-tolerance or other more punitive approaches to discipline that involve extensive punishments, suspensions, and expulsions. The former principal of a Northeastern magnet was extremely committed to implementing PBIS, noting that school climate and safety were critical to the school's foundation.

### *Engaging families and the community.*

Family and community engagement is vital to the success of magnet schools. Communicating with families can be accomplished in a variety of ways and using different approaches is likely to help in reaching families of diverse backgrounds. For example, teachers communicate directly with parents on a regular basis through paper and electronic versions of newsletters. Schools also share information through robocalls and social media.

In addition to general information, teachers from a Western magnet find that personal contact is important and frequently call or connect directly with parents one-on-one. At a Northeastern magnet, advisory teachers are responsible for contacting parents of their six advisory students. Formally organized parent groups, including the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), are active at all three schools, although there are some challenges with diverse parent representation in these groups, issues that teachers and leaders try to address by personally inviting parents of different races to attend the meetings. However, magnet teachers and leaders acknowledge the importance of thinking flexibly about parent engagement by not only inviting them to the school campus, but also visiting them at home or reaching out to them by phone. Using a variety of different strategies, over three-fourths of teachers from the three magnets we studied in depth report that families are involved in the school.

**Providing translators for meetings and written information in languages other than English helps better engage families with diverse linguistic backgrounds.**

Providing translators for meetings and written information in languages other than English helps better engage families with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, having teachers and staff members who speak the most commonly spoken languages can be very helpful. For example, the Western magnet school has a bilingual parent liaison and a bilingual receptionist and the Northeastern magnet employed a bilingual receptionist.

Community and business partnerships are often very beneficial for magnets, particularly when they support the magnet theme. Around three-quarters of the teachers at the three magnets we studied in depth believe that community partnerships have aided the magnets in terms of both academic success and integration efforts. ■

# SUSTAINING A MAGNET SCHOOL

After enrolling a diverse student body and successfully developing structures to facilitate integration within the school, magnets must work to sustain their success and diversity. Our study of three academically successful and racially diverse magnet schools identified sustainability concerns related to teacher and leader turnover, professional development, funding, and the school's mission and vision.

High turnover among teachers and leaders is a common challenge for sustainability in magnets, particularly if they received specialized training around the theme. For example, during the first five years of a Southeastern magnet's existence, there were three different principals, and five years after becoming a magnet, the other two magnets in our in-depth study both had a new principal. Turnover can be attributed to the high demands placed on leaders of magnet schools and the reality that such leaders are very much sought after if they are successful. As leaders and teachers leave magnet schools, new teachers and leaders must receive training around both the magnet theme and the importance of working with a diverse group of students. This can be a challenge once additional funding dries up. For example, a Northeastern magnet leader explained, "The money did help us with the theme integration. To have theme coaches—people with no teaching load—that was a gift to us.… Embedded professional development was really helpful. Having the funding for that staff was really helpful. They did theme implementation and research-based instructional strategies, to help the teachers to be the best teachers they could be. That staffing was very helpful and a little short-lived.… Lots of new teachers who could have used the theme coaches didn't benefit because they came on board later." In short, all teachers require ongoing professional development around the theme and diversity.

**Remaining committed to and passionate about the magnet's mission and vision is also important for sustaining success.**

The infusion of financial resources from MSAP or other funding agencies helps make it feasible for magnets to purchase resources, technology, and materials to support their magnet themes. However, after the grant ends and the money runs out, the technology, materials, and resources still need to be updated, repaired, and in some cases, replaced. As a magnet leader in the Northeast described, "MSAP is seed money, but you need to be able to continue after." Sustaining a magnet program requires upkeep of the initial purchases. Funding for this ongoing expense can be challenging. For a Western magnet, the district committed to the upkeep of the one-to-one technology that had been purchased through the MSAP grant. In addition, individual teachers and a parent grant committee actively apply for smaller grants to sustain the school. Similarly, in a Southeastern magnet, a group of parents found time to write grants to solicit external support and the

PTA now raises funds for the school. During the first year of its operation, a principal at a magnet school in the Northeast thought strategically about how to best preserve funding for the theme coaches and content area experts, in part by continuing to boost the school's enrollment numbers.

Remaining committed to and passionate about the magnet's mission and vision is also important for sustaining success. Magnets have addressed this by revisiting their vision and reviewing their activities to ensure they are in alignment with the schools' goals. If the school's needs have changed, they have considered revising the mission and vision. The former principal of a Western magnet suggested, "In order to sustain the overall success, they need to periodically review the vision and the goals and see if they are still relevant today. I think that they need to make sure that they're not sprawling too much." Mission drift, in other words, can be a serious concern as magnets evolve over time. Lastly, as noted above, developing a collaborative environment is also important for sustaining the magnet over time. A former principal at a Western magnet emphasized, "You need to be a collaborative leader.… If you come in and you say, 'I'm gonna be the white knight on the white horse.… I'm gonna come in and try to save everything,' as soon as you leave, then the initiative falls apart. But if you say, 'We're doing this together. It's not about me; it's about us. It's about investing in and empowering the teachers.' That carries on forever."

Planning for the long-term success of a magnet school is important. By proactively incorporating structures and processes that address the common concerns of teacher and leader turnover, professional development, funding, and commitment to the school's mission and vision, magnet schools can plan for sustainability from the start. ■

# HOW TO BUILD POLITICAL WILL FOR DIVERSE AND EQUITABLE MAGNET SCHOOLS[64]

Magnet schools, by design, should appeal to a broad cross-section of community stakeholders. These range from families and students interested in a particular theme or type of programming, to business leaders looking for innovative and rigorous curricula that prepares the workforce, to policymakers across the political spectrum working to provide choice and equal educational opportunity to students—among others. A crucial challenge is to maintain a focus on equity and integration over time, particularly as magnets become oversubscribed.

Civil Rights Project/*Proyecto Derechos Civiles*

# A METROPOLITAN, PRO-BUSINESS SUCCESS IN TEXAS

In Waco, Texas, a combination of metropolitan regionalism and a genuinely attractive magnet opportunity is producing significant opportunities for diversity.

Waco Independent School District has had success recruiting a diverse group of students across McLennan County. It's enrollment has increased each year, with an increase of 35 percent expected for 2017-2018, but there is still room for more growth. The WISD population is predominately non-white and largely Hispanic, while the metro Waco area is more balanced demographically. The District also recruits from neighboring school districts as well.

Because WISD is closely aligned with an active business community that has a need for trained workers, the school district has successfully crossed many institutional barriers.

The Greater Waco Advanced Manufacturing Academy (GWAMA) is the first regional academy of its kind in the area, and enrollment growth is due in large part to enthusiastic support from the business community.

Waco is in a region of 259,000 residents with an active manufacturing sector. "GWAMA is the place where education and the workforce meet to create a better future for Texas," said Waco ISD's Director of Career Technology Education Donna McKethan.

High schools from 13 neighboring school districts join students from Waco ISD's two main high schools to utilize skills in welding, precision metal manufacturing, and robotics. In September of 2017, another career track will begin in construction sciences, supported by the local homebuilder's association and sparked by a growing skills gap in construction related trades.

GWAMA is a potential national model for an academy type curriculum, and the state of the art equipment and facility help students develop a career path that will result in a well-paying skilled job upon graduation.

There are many career education centers in the U.S. where students learn specialized skills for specific careers for half of the day and then return to their original assigned school for the rest of the day to complete required courses in core subjects.

Unlike the country as a whole, jobs in manufacturing are growing in Texas, which increases the importance of technical vocational training. There is widespread recognition of the need for such training among both employers and students, and schools are looking for models for non-college bound students.

The success of the Greater Waco Advanced Manufacturing Academy has attracted many visitors, not only educational leaders but also business and economic development groups.

Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath visited the school in early 2016, praising the regional approach: "The kind of efficiencies you can gain by joining forces make a great deal of sense. It's great to see Waco ISD leading this consortium of Waco school systems," he said.

"The business community has a great deal to add to what we do in public education, both in terms of the focus on performance and outcomes and aligning the skills that we're developing in kids with the needs of a modern economy."[67]

Waco ISD has successfully created an important new educational option for dozens of school districts in Central Texas. GWAMA's enrollment this year was 175 students, of which 67 percent were Hispanic, 19 percent were White, and 14 percent were African-American.

The District draws from the entire metro area and offers a genuinely attractive option, breaking some of the negative stereotypes about vocational-technical education and provides a strong connection with employers. School's administrators say employers welcome diversity, especially if it increases the number of skilled workers available for their company.

This year alone, 20 GWAMA students will enter the workforce, taking positions with local companies utilizing tools provided by an area foundation gift.

Seven more graduates received scholarships to Texas State Technical College, and two-thirds of graduating students are entering post-secondary educational institutions.

More school districts are joining the program this coming year. ■

A note here about the importance of working toward systemic choice. Some districts, like Montclair, New Jersey or Cambridge, Massachusetts, have converted all schools into magnets. Every family selects a set of schools they would be interested in their children attending, with the district making the final assignment decision. In both Montclair and Cambridge, that decision incorporates diversity goals designed to ensure that each school roughly reflects community demographics. Systemic choice (often called controlled choice) can also include regular public schools and magnet schools, as is the case in Louisville-Jefferson County, Kentucky. What it creates is an environment where everyone is choosing, which can help alleviate the concern that more informed families—who are often more highly resourced—take disproportionate advantage of choice. Relatedly, systemic school choice reduces the perception and possibility that some schools are more advantaged than others. At the same time, designing a strong choice system in which each school has comparable appeal is complex work and requires consistent evaluation for inequities that may arise related to schools or families. Ensuring that the magnet outreach and application process is embedded within a broader system of choice offers one way to alleviate these concerns.

In Berkeley, California, which operates under a systemic choice framework, the district describes the theory behind its student assignment policy in this way: "[C]hoosing or attending one school rather than another will confer neither significant advantage or disadvantage to pupils enrolled at any individual site." This simple statement sends a powerful, but rarely stated, message to the public: district leaders are aware of how student assignment can affect schools and they will take steps to ensure that the district's student assignment plan does not frustrate its goal of providing a quality education to every student. When working on creating diverse and equitable magnet schools and systemic choice within a school district that is less direct about, or less committed to, pursuing equity through student assignment, your community engagement efforts should help bring issues of diversity and equity into the public discussion (see the additional resources section for more information). State-level educational leaders and policymakers also could potentially help you accomplish this. Of course, it is always important to continue emphasizing the educational benefits that diverse learning environments offer all children.

## Igniting Action and Conversation about Integration: The Role of Leadership and Policy

Creating a magnet school can sometimes serve as the foundation for important community conversations about integration. Magnet leaders in various regions of the country credit the process of applying for federal MSAP grants with bringing desegregation to the forefront of discussions in districts where desegregation had not previously been a priority. Creating a magnet school that is intended to be racially diverse prompts action and intentional desegregation efforts. A Western magnet director acknowledged there was "No question that having federal funding for desegregation absolutely influenced the commitment to desegregation. The desegregation plan really grew out of the MSAP grant. We didn't have one before. Having the federal grant specifically for this, tied to desegregation made a big difference for our district." Sharing a similar perspective, a magnet director in the Southwest reflected, "We didn't talk a lot about desegregation and MGI (minority group isolation) until we received the 2010 grant so we really think that that made a huge difference in our district."

Given the success that the federal magnet program dollars, which have increased slightly under the new federal spending bill, have had in helping districts initiate or continue conversations about diverse and equitable schools, state-level policymakers should seek to incentivize similar behaviors. They could do so either by designing a state-level equivalent of the magnet schools assistance program or by initiating planning and implementation grants for a broader array of voluntary student assignment policies that might include magnet schools. New York offers an example of state action to promote magnet schools through the use of school improvement funding. In 2014, the state adopted a "socioeconomic integration pilot program," which offers up to $1.25 million to applicants who can propose programs that will increase integration across district

boundaries—through magnet school-type programs—in the state's lowest-performing schools.[68]

Conversations about magnet schools help educators, families, and community members learn about the many benefits of integration for students and for the community. A Southeastern magnet director emphasized the academic benefits of diverse learning environments, "Richness of diversity only enhances the learning experience, especially with PB [project based] and inquiry-based learning, which a lot of our magnet programs do." A Southwestern magnet director commented on how parents as well as district officials observe the benefits of diverse educational experiences, "We definitely see the mix of socioeconomics and ethnicity as being beneficial to all involved, not just those with low socioeconomics. We have input from parents that said, 'If we had not chosen this school, our child would not have had the exposure and the types of friendships that she would have had if she had stayed in our neighborhood. And the educational opportunities.' So outside of our opinions of if it's been beneficial, our parents see it too." Magnet leaders from a Northeastern district remarked on how "diversity helps to give students tangible, marketable skills and to be college and career ready." The business community in a Southwestern city also recognized similar benefits, "We live in a global society and we need to be able to work in that nature. Our students come here with the same purpose and we have students of great affluence and in great poverty. When our students go on to the workforce, these guys are going to be brought together for collaborative projects. That's what the manufacturing industry is predicated upon, so we are preparing them for that and it is well-noted by the partners and businesses we work with."

While there are surely benefits to keeping members of the public engaged on issues related to magnet school equity and diversity on an ongoing basis, it may not be feasible or necessary.[69] Other communities increase awareness and engagement around integration less frequently, mostly when their local school districts are grappling with issues related to student assignment. Here are some examples of community engagement efforts, along with some commonly used tools and tips:

### *Community Meetings*

Community meetings allow people to get information about magnet schools and engage in open conversations about the role school integration plays in education. It is important to structure community meetings in a way that enables people to actively participate. It is also helpful to remember that people will experience a range of emotions while talking about student assignment. Be prepared for potentially difficult situations by thinking about how you will respond to challenging situations and what additional support you may need. Using outside facilitators who are neutral and not attached to any one side of an argument may be helpful. When planning community meetings, remember that the voices and viewpoints heard most often are not always representative of how people in your community think and feel about student assignment. Some of your hardest and most important work may to bring more people into the discussion. Work to ensure that everyone in your community feels welcome to participate by being strategic about the time and location of meetings, providing free childcare, holding multiple meetings, and offering translation services.

Working with a local organization or university-based center that is familiar with issues related to education and K-12 integration can also help

you engage the public, especially when school districts lack resources and/or the desire to wrestle with broader, more difficult issues that relate to magnet schools and/or student assignment. Local organizations and universities often have a wealth of helpful resources (e.g. research and data, faculty/staff with subject-matter expertise, volunteer staffing, meeting space, equipment, financial resources, etc.) that may not otherwise be available. Because they are less directly involved in the process than school districts and community groups, another benefit to working with outside groups is that they can help keep the conversation moving forward, even when it seems stuck.

### *Surveys, Focus Groups, and Living Room Dialogues*

Organizers and district officials in Louisville, KY and Montclair, NJ have used focus groups and surveys to understand more about the beliefs people in their communities held about student assignment and integration. For example, surveys asked:

- how strongly people supported the neighborhood school concept
- to what extent they valued choice in education (including whether they would consider sending their child to a magnet school and what types of schools would be appealing to them)
- the amount of time they considered reasonable for students to spend traveling on buses
- whether, and to what extent, they considered integration to be an important value in educating children in the 21st century
- which types of diversity people considered to be important (e.g. racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, parental education levels, standardized test performance levels, etc.)
- whether, and how, people felt that their communities benefitted from existing magnet schools
- if people were surprised to learn about continued levels of racial isolation in their community's housing patterns

When using these tools, take steps to ensure that you are adequately documenting the process and the viewpoints that emerge. During focus groups you might consider assigning multiple note-takers to document conversations, getting permission to use cameras and/or voice recorders so that you can summarize common themes and opinions more accurately afterwards, and using exit surveys. Some of these tools, while helpful, may also prevent people from openly sharing their opinions, so choose the tools that are most appropriate given your goals and local context. When using surveys, consider in advance how you will collect data and whether you have the capacity to analyze it well.

Remember, too, that unless you take steps to ensure that you receive survey responses that capture the diversity in your community, your survey results may not capture important viewpoints in your community and/or could give you an inaccurate idea of what people want and believe.

Following their focus groups, organizers in Montclair, NJ also planned to coordinate living room dialogues. Over the course of several weeks, groups of 10-12 people would meet for several hours. These more informal conversations were designed to help community members (including high school students) begin to better understand diverse perspectives and express their beliefs and ideas to one another. If you are interested in using living room dialogues, be sure that a diversity of viewpoints are represented and that the host has the tools and skills he/she needs to create a safe space in which participants feel comfortable engaging in open and honest dialogue.

### *Using and/or Creating Print and Video Resources*

You might consider using outside resources, such as videos and/or books, to help begin and/or deepen discussions about student assignment. Doing so may enable community members to think about school integration and student assignment in new and less threatening ways, keeping people engaged in the issues over a longer period of time. While there are only a few resources that are closely related to student assignment, here are a handful of ideas from which you might draw (see "Further Reading" section for availability of these resources):

- Written by Sandra Tsing Loh, *Mother on Fire* tells the story of a mother's search for a suitable kindergarten for her four-year-old daughter. As she considers all of her options (from competitive private institutions to public and magnet schools), she describes the stress and panic involved in finding the ideal school.
- The documentary film series *Race: Power of an Illusion* explores the meaning and implications of race. It calls attention to the underlying social, economic, and political conditions that construct opportunity and advantage. The series attempts to shift conversation from "diversity" and respecting cultural difference to building a more just and equitable society.
- Another documentary, *What's Race Got To Do With It* (which builds on *Skin Deep,* a 1995 documentary with a similar story line), follows students who are participating in a 16-week intergroup dialogue program. The film explores issues related to diversity at the college level (e.g. underrepresentation, the limitations of multiculturalism, equity and affirmative action). The movie demonstrates how sustained dialogue can gradually lead to attitudinal change, as students in the film acknowledge and work through their differences and prejudices.
- Another video resource that might help deepen your community's discussion about student assignment is called *An Elementary Education.* This parent-produced documentary explores how people think about and perceive "neighborhood schools" that serve high numbers of low-income students and students of color. The film features interviews with parents, educators, and community members who discuss their thoughts and perceptions of Columbine Elementary School, a school that serves mostly low-income and Latino students, despite being situated in the mostly affluent and white town of Boulder, CO. This film may be useful to engage community members in discussions about the value of diversity, and how assumptions about school quality affect schools.
- Creating your own resources can also capture the story of your community in powerful ways. For example, when members of the Montclair, NJ parents association began to realize that support for the district's all-magnet structure was weakening, they created a video to explain its history. They interviewed men and women who shared memories of housing and school segregation in Montclair during the 1960s, and described Montclair's historical struggle to confront racism and inequality in the 1970s, explaining how parents and educators came to decide on a voluntary desegregation plan, converting all its schools into magnets. Today, the district still boasts that "the term 'neighborhood school' no longer exists in Montclair; the entire township is the neighborhood for every school.… What started as a desegregation plan has turned into a true system of choice." The video, *Our Schools, Our Town,* was used to help get people talking during focus groups and living room dialogues hosted by community organizers.

### *Using the Media to Engage the Public*

Many people find out about potential changes in student assignment by reading local newspapers, watching the news, or listening to the radio. Thus, when working to engage your community, monitoring the news about student assignment is vital. The media can play a supportive role in the student assignment planning process by providing important context and data. For instance, the local newspaper in Omaha, NE was credited with helping educators and policymakers build public support for regional school equity measures. On the other hand, news reports about student assignment can potentially stifle healthy and thorough examination of the issues. In these situations, developing a strong communications strategy is essential to the success of your community engagement efforts. Developing positive relationships with members of the media is extremely helpful, so that your viewpoint is represented. It may be useful to sketch out op-eds in advance and help supporters craft op-eds and letters to the editor, to ensure that accurate information is conveyed to the community. You might consider assembling a team of community organizers, researchers/scholars, and parents who can respond to uneven and/or inaccurate reporting by submitting opinion articles and/or letters to the editor, participating in radio and/or television interviews, or providing media outlets with more information (research reports, alternative perspectives, promising practices/models, etc.).

**Sustained efforts to keep communities engaged and informed about integration do pay off.**

### *Concluding Thoughts*

Just as certain types of integration models may be more or less appropriate in different geographical areas, the types of community engagement techniques and tools you use will depend on local context. In areas where court-ordered desegregation was particularly difficult, you may need to take extra steps to create an environment of trust and open communication before a productive conversation about how to move forward can begin. In communities that have supported diversity efforts for decades, it may not be necessary to spend lots of time trying to build public support. Organizers should not, however, take it for granted that communities will remain committed to integration efforts if there is no consistent effort to keep people aware of its importance. Continued outreach and engagement efforts could focus on how to modernize and/or improve your district's current plan, by discussing promising models and gauging your community's aspirations.

As you engage community members, make sure that they have the information they need to properly analyze the costs and benefits of various student assignment models. During fiscal crises, many school districts face major budget cuts. Spending money on transportation, which is now permitted under the renewed federal education bill, for increased integration or on magnet schools to fully implement and maintain themes may seem like an unnecessary expense. If this is a concern in your community, it is important to clearly and consistently articulate the educational benefits of integration, the need for transportation to carry out your district's plan, and the long-term value of staying committed to equity and diversity. Take steps to ensure that members of the public have an accurate understanding of the costs associated with various magnet school options—magnet plans that do not attempt to create and/or maintain diversity will not necessarily result in substantial savings for a school district. Determining how much a new magnet school will cost, in both the short and long term, is a complex process. Many factors are involved, such as building upgrades for theme implementation, teacher training, bus route efficiency, mandatory special education transportation expenses in your district, and the number and type

of magnet schools. Some estimates indicate that starting a magnet school tends to require about 10% more than the usual cost of running a school in the first year, but tapers off after that. Be consistent when discussing the financial aspects of student assignment by keeping equity, excellence, diversity, and parental discretion at the center of the conversation.

Sustained efforts to keep communities engaged and informed about integration do pay off. In time, many communities have grown to accept and support programs and policies that increase diversity. When St. Louis's interdistrict integration program began in 1981 under court order, suburban parents strongly resisted it. In the years since, the diversity created by this voluntary transfer program has come to be a valued aspect of education—white suburban students are some of the program's strongest supporters. In 2004, hundreds of suburban students protested the potential termination of these voluntary integration efforts by walking out of their classes. Educators in communities where integration programs have been sustained over the long-term commonly report similar stories—initial resistance leads first to acceptance, and often to strong support for the programs. As you develop your community engagement plan, keep in mind that students who participate in integration programs often talk about the importance of diversity (and the challenges it poses) in very powerful ways that resonate with strongly held American and moral values. Including these student voices can be a great way to enrich discussions about equity and diversity in your community.

Organizers and educators involved in integration efforts will tell you that creating more dynamic, functional, and equitable K-12 schools through increased diversity takes time. Diversity is not a quick fix to educational inequities and challenges that have existed for decades, rather it is a commitment to an aspiration that provides a stronger foundation for educational success that has proven potential for systemic transformation over the long-term. Strong community engagement efforts are vital in ensuring that your district's student assignment plan enables students to benefit from increased diversity, both now and into the future. ■

## Further Reading:


**Berkeley Unified Student Assignment Plan.**
www.berkeleyschools.net/information-on-berkeley-unifieds-student-assignment-plan/

**California News Reel. *Skin Deep*.**
http://newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0085

**California News Reel. *What's Race Got To Do With It?***
http://newsreel.org/video/WHATS-RACE-GOT-TO-DO-WITH-IT

**California News Reel. *Race: The Power of an Illusion*.**
www.newsreel.org/video/race-the-power-of-an-illusion

**Fagotto, Elena and Fung, Archon, "Sustaining Public Engagement: Embedded Deliberation in Local Communities," Everyday Democracy and the Kettering Foundation, 2009.**
https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/2606765.pdf

**Kirwan Institute for Race and Ethnicity (2009 October). *Final Report: Montclair Public Schools Focus Groups*.**
http://www.kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/reports/2010/03_2010_MontclairSchoolIntegrationFocusGroups.pdf

**Montclair Parent Teacher Association. *Our Schools, Our Town*.**
http://www.montclairpta.org.

**Montclair Public Schools. A Historical Perspective of Montclair's Magnet School System.**
www.montclair.k12.nj.us/district/magnet-system/historical-perspective/

**Scully, Patrick L. and McCoy, Martha L., "Study Circles: Local Deliberation as the Cornerstone of Deliberative Democracy," in Gastil, John and Levine, Peter, Editors. The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Citizen Engagement in the 21st Century. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.**
http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118105109.html

**Smith, S. S. (2010). Still Swimming Against the Resegregation Tide? A Suburban School District in the Aftermath of Parents Involved. *North Carolina Law Review, 88*.**
http://scholarship.law.unc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4425&context=nclr

**This Train Productions. "An Elementary Education."**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCEfOa5SluU

# RESOURCES:


### Alliance for Excellent Education
**www.All4ed.org**

The Alliance for Excellent Education works to improve public high school education by assembling and promoting research reports, partnering with relevant institutions, and recommending policy change. The Alliance's work focuses on promoting adolescent literacy, high school teacher quality, small learning communities, and general college preparedness.

### American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
**www.aasa.org**

AASA is a professional organization for public school district superintendents. AASA offers professional development, access to peer networks, and legislative advocacy to members. AASA also hosts the Stand Up for Public Education campaign, which supports outreach programs on the importance of public education.

### American Educational Research Association (AERA)
**www.aera.net**

AERA is a professional membership organization of researchers, policymakers, and educators. It promotes and correlates scholarship on education by hosting conferences, distributing fellowships, and creating networks among members. AERA also publishes online news releases and a journal, *The Educational Researcher.*

### American Psychological Association (APA)
**www.apa.org**

APA is the largest association of professional psychologists worldwide. The Association administers an accreditation program, runs a public education campaign and helps members convene and share information. APA also hosts practice groups in law and psychology and educational psychology, among other topics.

### Annenberg/CPB
**www.learner.org**

Annenberg/CPB uses media and telecommunications in an effort to advance excellent teaching. They provide educational video programs with coordinated Web and print materials for the professional development of K-12 teachers. Annenberg materials are distributed on the organization's digital satellite channel, streamed on demand from the web-site and distributed for purchase on videocassette and DVD.

### Annenberg Classroom
**www.annenbergclassroom.org/**

Annenberg Classroom is an online collection of teaching materials related to law and policy in the United States. The collection is useful for high school teachers or high school students themselves.

### Anti-Defamation League (ADL): Curriculum Connections
**www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections**

Curriculum Connections is a collection of lesson plans and other resources that can help educators integrate multicultural, anti-bias, and social justice themes into their curricula. A set of resources, each organized around a particular theme, is distributed by e-mail three to four times a year.

### Campaign for Educational Equity, Teachers College, Columbia University
**www.tc.edu/centers/EquityCampaign**

The Campaign executes and disseminates research-based analyses of key education policy issues. The Campaign's research focuses on intervention strategies like early childhood education, children's health and parental involvement. The Campaign's research work is enhanced by partnerships with the Harlem Children's Zone and New York City public schools.

### Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)
**http://www.cal.org/crede/**

CAL is dedicated to providing a comprehensive range of research-based information tools, and resources related to language and culture. The Center also provides technical assistance, professional development, curriculum development and program evaluation to help all students particularly English Language Learners succeed.

### The Center for Civil Rights at the University of North Carolina
**www.law.unc.edu/centers/civilrights/**

The Center for Civil Rights fosters empirical and analytical research, sponsors student inquiry and convenes faculty, visiting scholars, policy advocates and practicing attorneys to confront legal and social issues of greatest concern to racial and ethnic minorities and the poor. The Center's work focuses on many research interests, including housing, community development, and voting rights.

### Center for Education and Civil Rights
https://cecr.ed.psu.edu/

CECR is a hub for the generation of knowledge and coalition building within the education and civil rights communities to promote racial and ethnic equality in education. Based at Penn State University, the Center supports democratic values that are central to the mission of public universities.

### Center for Multicultural Education, University of Washington
www.depts.washington.edu/centerme/home.htm

The Center for Multicultural Education commands research projects and activities designed to advance educational equity, improve intergroup relations, and promote educational achievement. The Center publishes a handbook on Multicultural Education and also develops strategies for teachers and policymakers.

### Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE)
www.manoa.hawaii.edu/coe/credenational/

CREDE is focused on improving the education of students whose ability to reach their potential is challenged by language or cultural barriers, race, geographic location, or poverty. CREDE promotes research by university faculty and graduate students and provides educators with a range of tools to help them implement best practices in the classroom.

### Center for Social Inclusion
www.centerforsocialinclusion.org

The Center for Social Inclusion provides support to community organizations by performing applied research, disseminating publications, creating business models, and developing networks. The Center's work focuses on race relations and diversity in various regions. The Center also partners with the Diversity Advancement Project at the Kirwan Institute.

### Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard University
www.charleshamiltonhouston.org

The Charles Hamilton Houston Institute is a legal research organization devoted to honoring the legacy of civil rights lawyer and educator Charles Hamilton Houston.|The legal research of the Institute is focused on a variety of areas, including the school-to-prison pipeline, the crises faced by prisoners upon re-entry, and racial disparities in both education and capital sentencing.

### Chinese for Affirmative Action: Center for Asian American Advocacy (CAA)
www.caasf.org

CAA was founded to protect the civil and political rights of Chinese Americans, particularly those with limited proficiency in English. CAA engages in community and leadership development while focusing advocacy work on issues of racial justice, immigrant rights, and language rights.

### The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles (CRP)
www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu

The CRP, now based at UCLA, is devoted to researching social inequities, particularly in the areas of segregation in K-12 schools, Asian and Latino populations, high-stakes testing and Title I reforms. The CRP collaborates with scholars as well as with advocacy organizations, policymakers, and journalists.

### Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS)
www.cgcs.org

CGCS is an organization of the nation's 66 largest urban public school districts. The organization's members work on five task forces, which focus on school finance, achievement gaps, bilingual education, district leadership, and professional development. In addition to assembling members, CGCS participates in research and advocacy projects and publishes a newsletter, the Urban Educator.

### EdChange
www.edchange.org

EdChange is the organization of a team of teachers and education researchers dedicated to multiculturalism, diversity, and educational equity. EdChange offers online newsletters, documents, and workshops. Its materials focus on educational philosophy and the history of multiculturalism and social justice.

### The Education Alliance
www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/

Hosted by Brown University, the Education Alliance promotes district and school improvement with special attention to underperformance, equity, and diversity. The Alliance partners with schools, districts, and state departments of education to apply research findings towards educational challenges. The organization also designs and delivers expert services around planning, professional development, research, and evaluation.

### Education Week on the Web
www.edweek.org

Education Week is a print and on-line publication with articles about education news worldwide, and a searchable on-line index.

### Eye on Education
www.eyeoneducation.tv

Hosted by WGBH and the Boston Globe, Eye on Education is an informational website about education reform directed at young readers. The website provides additional resources for high school students in Massachusetts, including a directory of area high schools and MCAS information.

### Facing History and Ourselves
www.facinghistory.org

Facing History engages teachers and students in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism. Facing History produces classroom materials, offers professional development programs, and pursues research in pedagogical strategies.

### Filipino Advocates for Justice
**www.filipinos4justice.org**

In the spirit of Bayanihan, the vision of Filipino Advocates for Justice is to foster a Filipino community with the power to advance social and economic justice, and to realize democratic and human rights for everyone.

### The Gallery of Teaching and Learning
**www.gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/**

The Gallery of Teaching and Learning, created by the Knowledge Media Laboratory of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, is a collection of digital records of lesson plans and classroom practices to be shared by teachers nationwide.

### Haas Institute at Berkeley
**http://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/**

The Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley brings together researchers, organizers, stakeholders, communicators, and policymakers to identify and eliminate the barriers to an inclusive, just, and sustainable society and to create transformative change toward a more equitable nation.

### The Institute on Race and Poverty
**www.irpumn.org/**

The Institute on Race & Poverty (IRP) investigates the ways that policies and practices disproportionately affect people of color and the disadvantaged. A core purpose for IRP's work is to ensure that people have access to opportunity. Another is to help the places where people live develop in ways that both promote access to opportunity and help maintain regional stability.

### Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Ohio State University
**www.kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/**

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity is a multidisciplinary research organization that investigates potential causes of and solutions to racial and ethnic inequalities. The Institute hosts the Diversity Advancement Project, which promotes diversity in public and private institutions, and the African American Male project. The Institute also publishes *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts.*

### League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
**www.lulac.org**

LULAC is the oldest membership organization of Hispanic Americans, and executes its goals of community development and the promotion of civil rights through the provision of scholarships and educational services, the development of corporate alliances, and the execution of outreach and advocacy projects.

### Magnet Schools of America (MSA)
**http://www.magnet.edu/**

Magnet Schools of America (MSA) is a national nonprofit professional education association. It represents magnet schools, school district leaders, principals, teachers, parents and families, business partners, and institutions of higher education. Technical assistance is provided to schools and districts on a fee for service basis through the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership (NIMSL). Services can be tailored to meet the individual needs of schools and districts through our exclusive network of national magnet school experts.

### Multicultural Review
**www.mcreview.com**

*Multicultural Review* is a quarterly trade journal and book review dedicated to a better understanding of ethnic, racial, and religious diversity. It is intended for educators and librarians at all levels.

### National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
**www.naacp.org**

The NAACP is a membership organization committed to ensuring the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all persons and to eliminating racial hatred and discrimination.

### National Academy of Education (NAEd)
**www.naeducation.org**

NAEd is a selective membership organization comprised of scholars of educational policies and methods. In addition to serving on committees and study panels, Academy members are also deeply engaged in NAEd's professional development programs, which aim to prepare of the next generation of scholars of education. NAEd also sponsors fellowship programs. PBS Teacher Source

### National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
**http://www.nabe.org/**

NABE is a national professional organization focused on representing bilingual learners and bilingual education professionals. The association advocates for bilingual learners and families to cultivate a multilingual multicultural society.

### National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)
**www.nameorg.org**

NAME is a membership organization comprised of individuals interested in multicultural education. Members are educators from preschool to higher education, as well as business and community representatives. NAME publishes a quarterly journal, *Multicultural Perspectives,* and hosts conferences and has local chapters.

### National Coalition on School Diversity (NCSD)
**http://school-diversity.org/**

The National Coalition on School Diversity (NCSD) is a network of national civil rights organizations, university-based research centers, and state and local coalitions working to expand support for government policies that promote school diversity and reduce racial and economic isolation in elementary

and secondary schools. It also supports the work of state and local school diversity practitioners. The work is informed by an advisory panel of scholars and academic researchers whose work relates to issues of equity, diversity, and desegregation/integration.

### National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
**www.nclr.org**

NCLR is the largest national constituency-based Hispanic organization. NCLR assists local organizations with research, advocacy, and capacity-building, aiming to reduce poverty and discrimination and to secure opportunities for all Hispanic Americans.

### National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA)
**www.nationalfairhousing.org**

NFHA is a national organization dedicated to ending discrimination in housing. The Alliance develops local housing organizations through education and training programs, and also works with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to create national public education campaigns about housing and lending discrimination.

### The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
**www.pta.org/homepage.html**

The National PTA is a membership organization that intends to provide resources and guidance to parents seeking to involve themselves in the education of their children and community. The National PTA consists of members of all local PTAs. The Association offers school and community workshops, runs a parental involvement certification program, hosts a national convention, and publishes a bimonthly magazine, *Our Children*.

### National School Boards Association (NSBA)
**www.nsba.org**

NSBA is a nationwide organization representing public school governing bodies. Its mission is to foster quality and equity in public education through effective school board leadership. It also hosts the Council of School Attorneys and the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE), a membership organization of urban school board members.

### National Urban League
**www.nul.org**

The Urban League is the nation's oldest and largest community-based movement devoted to the economic and social empowerment of African Americans. The Urban League publishes an annual collection of essays, *The State of Black America,* focusing on racial equality and African American life.

### PBS Teacher Source
**www.pbs.org/teachersource**

PBS Teacher Source provides lesson plans and activities based on PBS's quality programming and educational services. It also provides resources and advice about child rearing to parents. PBS Teacher Source is a partner organization of Teachers' Domain.

### Poverty and Race Research Action Council (PRRAC)
**www.prrac.org**

PRRAC is a national organization of major civil rights, civil liberties, and anti-poverty groups. PRRAC connects advocacy with research by sponsoring studies in social science, convening advocates and researchers, and publishing the bimonthly *Poverty & Race* newsletter.

### Public Education Network (PEN)
**www.publiceducation.org**

PEN is a membership organization seeking to develop equal and effective public education by helping individuals start or join community advocacy organizations, called local education funds, to improve public education in their area. The Network also increases awareness and discussion of education reform issues through a variety of publications.

### Rethinking Schools
**www.rethinkingschools.org**

Rethinking Schools publishes educational materials for teachers and students as well as research reports on educational policy. It seeks to use public education to address social inequities.

### Safe Schools Coalition
**www.safeschoolscoalition.org**

With the intention of promoting schools as safe spaces for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender youth and families, the Safe Schools Coalition provides resources and training to school staff, conducts research on education policy and raises awareness on sexual minority youth and parents.

### South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow (SAALT)
**www.saalt.org**

SAALT is a national organization dedicated to insuring the full and equal participation of South Asians in the civic and political life of the United States. SAALT seeks to foster engagement in South Asian communities and to increase public education about issues affecting South Asians.

### Street Law
**www.streetlaw.org**

Street Law is an organization devoted to providing legal education to high school students across America. Street Law provides seminars for high school teachers and publishes *Street Law: A Course in Practical Law,* a textbook and teaching manual for high school classes. Street Law partnerships, in which law students assist in the teaching of high school classes or legal outreach programs, exist at over 70 law schools in America.

### Teachers' Domain
**www.teachersdomain.org**

Produced by WGBH Boston, Teachers' Domain provides multimedia resources, including copies of public television programs like *Nova* and *American Experience,* for both the classroom and professional development. Teachers' Domain lesson

plans conform to national and state standards. Teachers' Domain is a partner organization of PBS Teacher Source.

### Teaching Tolerance
### www.teachingtolerance.org

Founded by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance provides free classroom materials and educator handbooks for the development curricula about respecting differences and appreciating diversity. Teaching Tolerance's website also includes resources for students and parents.

### U.S. Department of Education Equity Assistance Centers
### https://www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/contacts.html

The four Equity Assistance Centers are funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. They provide assistance in the areas of race, gender, national origin, and religion to public school districts to promote equal educational opportunities.

### WGBH Teacher Training Tapes
### http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/learn/teacher-training.html

WGBH provides videotapes for training teachers. The tapes review teaching styles in various disciplines as well as individual lesson plans. Tapes can be ordered by mail or phone. ■

## Footnotes:

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2 Siegel-Hawley, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2013). Designing choice: Magnet school structures and racial diversity. In G. Orfield & E. Frankenberg (Eds.), Educational delusions? Why choice can deepen inequality and how to make schools fair (pp. 107-128). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

3 Interview and site visit data were collected as part of 2010 and 2013 districts' work with the federal magnet school grant. The interviews and site visits were supported by a grant from MSAP; however, the contents of this manual do not represent the viewpoints or guidance of MSAP or the United States Department of Education and are not in any way endorsed by MSAP. This manual is an independent publication of The Civil Rights Project.

4 This section is reprinted and adapted from pp. 110-122 of Siegel-Hawley, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2013). Designing choice: Magnet school structures and racial diversity. In G. Orfield & E. Frankenberg (Eds.), Educational delusions? Why choice can deepen inequality and how to make schools fair (pp. 107-128). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

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10 Blank, R. (1989). Educational effects of magnet high schools. Madison, WI: National Center on Effective Secondary Schools.

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## For More Information:

The Civil Rights Project/*Proyecto Derechos Civiles*
University of California, Los Angeles

8370 Math Sciences, Box 951521
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521

310-267-5562
crp@ucla.edu
www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu

The Civil Rights Project *Proyecto Derechos Civiles*