

Magnet Schools Program, 2004-05

REIS05-143-4

At a Glance

This year marked the 29th year since the establishment of magnet schools in the Dallas Independent School District. The magnet school concept originated as part of the 1976 Desegregation Court order of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas. The Magnet Schools were expected to promote voluntary desegregation by offering unique educational opportunities through specialty curricula which could not be found within the district's traditionally configured neighborhood schools. After almost three decades of monitoring the Dallas Independent School District was officially released from the Desegregation Court Order on June 5, 2003. Upon release from the Court order, the district adopted a declaration of Commitments and Covenants to maintain certain programs and policies formerly mandated by that order. The magnet schools program was one of the programs to be maintained. Based on the current assessment 9 magnet high, 10 academy middle, and 7 vanguard elementary schools operated during the 2004-05 school year.

Budget

The 2004-05 budget for magnet high schools was \$23,867,404, an increase of 3% over last year's allocation. Similarly, the academies and vanguards received an 8% increase that resulted in a budget of \$16,507,869. The budget increase range for high schools was 1% to 12% and for academies and vanguards, the range was 3% to 6%.

Student Ethnic/Gender Distributions

Of the 8,615 students enrolled in the Magnet Schools Program, 5,452 (63.3%) were in the magnet high schools, 2,159 (25.1%) were enrolled in the academies, and 1,004 (11.6%) were in the vanguard elementary schools. At all levels of the magnet schools program (magnet, academy, and vanguard), females showed greater percentages in the student population. At the high school level, 34.9% of the student population were African Americans, 50.6% were Hispanics, 11.7% were White, and 2.8%

were Others. At the academies, 36.4% of the students were African Americans, 50.8% were Hispanics, 10.5% were Whites, and 2.3% were Others. Among the vanguards, 37.7% of the students were African Americans, 42.4% were Hispanics, 16.9% were Whites, and 3.0% were Others.

Numerical Demand for Magnet Programs

Grade 9 applications for 2005-06 admissions were down by 14 from the previous year, from 2,316 to 2,303. Magnet applications increased at all high schools except Skyline CDC and Arts who had decreases of 296 and 7, respectively.

Grade 7 applications were up by 270, from 1,556 in 2004-05 to 1,826 for 2005-06. For applications received, Longfellow experienced the most significant increase followed by Travis, Dealey, Spence, Holmes, Dallas Environmental Science Academy, and Stone, while applications at Greiner, and Atwell decreased.

At the vanguard level, for entry Grade 4, applications decreased by 43 for the 2005-06 school year. For vanguard applications, only Travis, Lanier, and Polk experienced increases.

Overall, for Grades 4, 7, and 9, applications to the magnet program increased from 4,379 in 2004-05 to 4,592 for the 2005-06 school year (a gain of 213).

Achievement Outcomes of Magnet Students

TAKS. In Grades 9-11, the TAKS passing rates at all magnet high schools in reading, and mathematics were higher than the district's rates. At Grade 11, the Talented and Gifted Magnet reported the highest passing rate of 100.0% in both reading and mathematics, while Skyline CDC reported the lowest rates of 95.4% and 89.1%, respectively.

At Grade 10, the Talented and Gifted Magnet reported the highest passing rates of 100% in both reading and mathematics, while the lowest passing rates were at Humanities with 85.7% in reading and 72.7% in mathematics.

At Grade 9, the highest passing rate in reading was reported by Education and Social Services and Talented and Gifted Magnets (both 100%), while the lowest passing rates were reported by Humanities and Skyline CDC (both 94.9%). In mathematics, the passing rates ranged from 74.6% at Humanities to 98.1% at the Science Magnet.

Academy students scored significantly above district averages at all schools in both Grades 7 and Grade 8. The district's percent passing in Grade 8 reading was 70.8%, while the lowest percent passing at any of the academies was 96.8%, at Greiner .

In Grade 7 writing, the district's percent passing was 78.9% compared to the lowest academy percent passing of 94.6% at Holmes Academy. Greiner, Spence and Travis reported 100% passing rates in writing. The district's passing rate in reading was 63.6%, while the lowest rate for the academies was 88.0% at Dealey. Travis reported a 100% passing rate in reading. For mathematics, the district's passing rate was 52.2%, while lowest rate for the academies was 75.9%.

All vanguards posted passing rates well above the district's across all grade levels in all subjects. At Grade 6, the district's passing rate in reading was 74.5%, while the lowest passing rate at any of the vanguards was 94.2% at Stone. Travis reported a 100% passing rate in reading. The district's Grade 6 passing rate for mathematics was 68.8%, while the lowest vanguard passing rate was 76.9.

At Grade 5 the district's passing rate in reading was 56.5% compared to the lowest vanguard passing rate of 83.3% at Stone. Travis reported a 100% passing rate in reading. The passing rate for the district in mathematics was 61.1% compared to a vanguard low of 77.1% at Stone. At Grade 4, Lanier and Travis reported 100% passing rates in writing, while the district's passing rate was 79.7%. Of the remaining vanguards the lowest passing rate was 86.0%, at Stone. In reading, the district's passing rate was 66.3%, while the lowest passing rate of the vanguards was 84.0%. Similarly, the district's passing rate in mathematics was 70.0%, while the lowest passing rate of the vanguards was 72.0%, at Stone.

All magnet schools reported substantially higher rates than the district for Grade 11 students passing all tests taken. (Table 1)

Table 1

Number and Percent of Magnet Students Passing All TAKS Tests Taken, Grade 11, 2004-05

School	Number Passed All	Percent Passed All
Arts	179	98.9
Humanities	65	98.5
Skyline CDC	505	98.2
BMC	91	100.0
ESSM	42	100.0
Health	109	100.0
Law	93	98.9
Science	75	100.0
TAG	<u>48</u>	100.0
All Magnets		98.9
District	5,569	80.0

ITBS. Magnet students were matched with non-magnet students on gender, ethnicity, free/reduced lunch status, and grade level. Results of the 2004-05 comparisons indicated that magnet students scored significantly higher than non-magnet students in reading and mathematics at six grade levels (9, 7-8, and 4-6).

Advanced Placement Examinations. The district's 2003-04 average of 29% passing on Advanced Placement Examinations taken was three percentage points below the 2002-03 average. Four magnet schools (Talented and Gifted, Arts, Science, and Education and Social Services) surpassed this average.

Recommendations

- On a continuous basis, review the magnet program's specialty offerings and its vertical curriculum alignment and make necessary adjustments when needed.
- Evaluate the curriculum at schools that attract primarily one gender to assess the possibility of creating course offerings that are more appealing to both males and females.
- The administration should strongly encourage all magnet high schools to implement an effective internship program.