

Magnet Review Focus Group with Parent/Community Groups

(155 Participants)

April 19, May 29 & 30, June 4 & 6

QUESTION #1:

**What do you think the roles (objectives) of magnets should be in the district?
Should student achievement be explicitly stated in the Magnet Objectives?**

- Introduce and encourage students to explore ways to expand themselves; be exposed to non-typical areas of learning
- Support the continuation of this objective
- YES – love it!
- Look at where magnets are located to see if all families have geographical access to these schools, choices in selections include magnets
- Utilization of existing facilities: if schools are under rolled, then close them. Otherwise keep the existing programs as is.
- To attract different students/families from different parts of the county
- Help diversify the student body by attracting different students than the base students – diversify in different areas – not just socio-economic status or race
- Meet the needs of students in different specialty areas
 - This means magnets of different types need to be spread across the county in different areas
 - Decentralize magnets – provide opportunities for specialization across the county
- The magnet schools should have objectives specific to the magnet program
- From a parent perspective, the expanded opportunities of the magnet program are also indicative of the expectation of high student achievement.
- How does capacity look inside the beltline? If growth is happening inside the beltline, there will be greater need for seats there and fewer seats available for students from other areas to attend.
- What requirements does federal funding bring? [Answer: the magnet programs must address racial and socioeconomic isolation.]
- Which magnet programs are in highest demand? There are schools without waitlists, and some with very long ones. Perhaps looking at specific programs no longer in high demand for revamping based on community needs/demands is a good idea.
- Question: Clarify the difference between magnet programming and curriculum enhancement programming. Magnets = extra teachers to offer additional choices/electives.
- Question: Do magnets systematically improve issues of poverty and achievement system wide?

- Would one magnet elementary in Knightdale drain achieving schools from the other Knightdale elementary schools, making one high achieving school and creating 3 or 4 low achieving schools?
- No, do not add achievement as a principle.
- These do not need to be changed – adding achievement would be at the expense of the ability to apply the first three.
- Student achievement should be the underlying principle – the unstated goal – for every school in the county. It doesn't need to be stated explicitly here. Doing so would make it seem more important here than in any other school.
- There's some concern about underperforming magnet schools – a higher achievement gap in schools that are using more resources than other schools.
- The magnet program did very well what it was designed to do – make sure buildings were used, desegregate schools, and keep tax levels low.
- The existence of magnet schools in some neighborhoods pulls a certain parent base (they move to that area to attend those schools).
- Definitely have achievement listed – can't imagine any school not listing achievement as a goal.
- There's a geographic challenge. When the magnets were created, the poverty was a central issue geographically.
- There are two issues – losing our own kids versus pulling kids from other places.
- Believe the right program will pull kids. But there remains a concern about the “consumption” of high achieving kids from all schools in Knightdale that creates more low achieving schools.
- Wording says “reduce high concentrations of poverty” – what about “supporting high areas of poverty”?
- The system has addressed the first half of the magnet equation – filling seats, reducing concentrations of poverty – now it's time to address the achievement portion of the equation (the achievement of all students at magnet schools).
- At all times, the number one goal of the school system is achievement. The BOE should always be reminded of this.
- At a minimum, the district needs to address low performing schools. You must do something.
- The magnet program offers more options in a public school setting.
- With current societal expectations of choice, the magnet program offers more than one area of interest at a single academic setting.
- Closer alignment with community and business leaders' effort to retain and attract business.
- The above provides support for expanded educational opportunities
- Continue with reduction of high concentrations of poverty and support diverse populations while maximizing use of school facilities
- Look at under enrolled schools as possible for magnet schools to attract parents
- This will make more parents likely to choose previously unattractive schools.
- Roles will be to increase attendance at the schools that are under enrolled
- Reduce high concentrations of poverty
- Maximize use of school facilities

- Need high demand programs that bring people to underchosen, high F/R schools
- Magnets support the district's efforts to differentiate instruction for students. They give parents a choice of academic programs for their children.
- Should provide heterogeneous school population for all schools in county
- Maximize the building use of neighborhood schools
- To our knowledge these three principals seem appropriate.
- How far is the county willing to go to support the magnet school initiatives? (As the county has sought to meet needs and interests of different parent groups, many, many choices have been developed and offered.)
- What does redefining the magnet program do to the federal funding piece?
- Is stability still an attractive component? Curriculum now matters a lot.
- Demagnetizing Lincoln Heights brought a decrease in quality – and a move to other magnets.
- Magnets should be an incubator for innovative programs that might be replicated elsewhere in the district at any school
- Supports existing objectives and carried out with fidelity. Important that our objectives give us access to federal funding opportunities
- Some magnets are located in more affluent areas - big difference between group 1, 2, 3 magnets and how we look at these objectives.
- Would like to see that poverty does not equate to non-achievement. This message needs to be spread / marketed in the community. Change our message as a district that base populations at magnets are not all struggling academically. And the inverse, that magnet students are not struggling.
- Does the grant preclude other schools from piloting magnet themes? Thus consolidating all new ideas at magnet schools? Answer among group is no –
- Some magnets don't have to fit the federal definition of what magnets are in order to exist. We currently don't have magnets that fit the federal definition. We need to broaden the definition as to what magnet programs can be.
- How do we balance making sure some schools don't "revert" if they lose magnet status?
- They are practical – only to a point – anymore.
- Ideally, you'd want a magnet school in every municipality. And so the equity magnets were developed, to satisfy demand in outlying areas.
- How do we distribute students – for whatever reason (capacity, demographics, etc.)? What tools exist for the administration to use? Are magnet schools still a good tool? The best way to offer choice is to have capacity – and we don't have a surplus of capacity.

Student Achievement

- How would achievement be explicitly stated as a magnet principle? There's a difference between rigor and achievement.
- Many parents send their children to magnet schools for academic benefits, so stating it explicitly makes sense.
- A persistent problem has been the disparity in performance of different student groups within magnet schools.

- See principle 3 – parents believe they’re getting expanded, enriched educational opportunities. Career preparation and opportunity could be added. Can differentiated opportunity be added? Move this to number one on the list.
- One way to include achievement may be to include it in something like...Encourage high achievement by reducing concentrations of poverty and supporting diverse populations.
- Do not add achievement to objectives to magnets
- What can we do to elevate opportunities for high achievers?
- Make sure that magnet schools are taking care of (base/proximity) students and magnet students with regards to achievement. Serving all students well.
- Closing the achievement gap
- Have measurable goals for achievement and what are we doing if we fall below a certain benchmark. See this for all 160 school
- Missing piece is a metric system kpi's. Innovative curriculum is a different methodology (key performance indicator).
- Magnets should not be held to a different standard than non-magnets with regards to achievement standards. Greater difference as to where kids are starting from in magnets as compared to a more homogenous school. Look at individual child and their starting point with regards to achievement.
- Agrees measurement of achievement should reveal growth of student
- Achievement was part of the objectives prior to the current list of objectives? Would support adding achievement to list of objectives
- Thinks achievement should be part of all 165 schools' objectives not just for magnets
- Student achievement can be explicitly stated on the objectives of the magnet schools because it is an underlying school system expectation.
- How would you fit achievement in?
- In addition to the objectives of the school district to seek to achieve high growth for all students, we use ... to enhance our curriculum and teaching of objectives.
- All magnet schools should increase achievement for all subgroups.
- Objectives of every school is high achievement
- No matter the school the student achievement objective should be the same however objectives should be differentiated in terms of offerings
- The core curriculum objectives need to be clear
- Student achievement is vitally important for the success of magnet.
- The magnet objectives imply if not explicitly state issue of student achievement.
- Student achievement should not be explicitly stated
- Student achievement is already stated as part of the overall district mission. Magnets would be additional opportunities.
- Programs and themes should have been to enhance and support student achievement
- YES, Student Achievement needs to be an explicit goal for magnet schools.
- Achievement in what? If achievement is the issue, then make sure you define it clearly. If it's the criteria then you are going to have to close a lot of schools.
- Yes, as long as it permeates all schools and is not just a magnet objective.
- The discussion stems around the base students and the perception that base students have been forgotten about with regards to achievement

- Fear among the group that achievement will be a measurement for magnets in the future to determine their longevity in the system. It should not be a factor to keep magnet status over time.
- Is there a focus group for base magnet parents? Need diversity in voices in the focus groups.
- How do you determine achievement at each grade level (elementary, middle , high)?
- Parent volunteerism impacts achievement....which is why it should be included. It's an enriching part of the community. Parents can create a strong school and set benchmarks that would be attainable.
- Every school should have high achievement growth wise but not as an entrance requirement.
- Would achievement be included in how we bus students? Is it fair to bus out or bus in kids based on diversity?
- Separate achievement from assignment.
- Focus on the child in terms of measurable growth (EOC and EOG)
- How much measuring are we going to do? Diversity is interesting because it's ok to have a diverse school, but not a diverse faculty or diverse AP classes.
- For downtown base population, proximity trumps what is best programmatically when all the proximate schools are magnets.
- Critical element to the success of WCPSS magnet schools is that all students participate in program as compared to other districts around the country that have a school within a school model.
- **QUESTION #2:**

Is there a need to create more magnet schools? If so, what factors should be considered in identifying new magnet schools? What innovative magnet programs/themes do you feel would attract applicants or be a good fit for the Wake County community if we added more magnet programs?

- There are increasingly fewer choices at middle and high schools...has there been any thought to increasing theme choices in higher grade levels?
- If there are no seats, then there's no need to bring a magnet program.
- Setting up the program created something that doesn't have an end-goal – there's no way to move that resource to any other place. There's no “when this criteria is met, the program will move to another location.” This lack of criteria has produced a lack of policy about when and how to demagnetize schools.
- There's no interest in a token magnet. There would need to be several magnets.
- If you're going to fix the magnet program, then do that. But if not, then give Knightdale that one magnet that you're going to give us, and give it to us now.
- Principals make more at magnet schools – why would they leave there to come to a tougher challenge in Knightdale?
- What about removing the “maximize use of school facilities” piece?

- A different idea about where magnet schools go needs to be considered. Perhaps that means no magnets west of the beltline, and many inside the beltline aren't needed. Geographic boundaries should be changed.
- The magnet grouping is a good idea – as a school begins to achieve goals, it moves from something like a group 1, to a group 2, then to group 3...and then to no magnet.
- Would rather the magnet program not have to pull kids to bring up achievement...but rather, to address the student achievement issue from the start.
- We absolutely need to create more magnet schools. Tremendous amount of growth in southeast Raleigh, and there are no new schools being built.
- How many magnet schools did the district start out with? [In 1983, there were about 26 – the proportion hasn't kept pace with growth. But today, there are no empty schools. So the needs are different.]
- Should we be targeting under chosen schools in the current student assignment choice plan? We have a measure we haven't had before – whether or not people are choosing schools.
- Neighborhoods with very high concentrations of poverty (like Chavis Heights) are no more – and those families are now being pushed out into other areas in the county. Consider adding magnet schools where those families are – where there are new high concentrations of poverty
- We need to consider adding more magnet schools, rather than just shifting them to different schools. It will cost more money, but we need to spend more money on education in Wake County.
- If a magnet school means that 45% of students are underachieving, then we have a problem. No one will choose that as a magnet program.
- Curriculum enhancement programs are confusing – there are magnet schools, and now other programs that people can choose. Perhaps less than confusing, it's more that there's an impact on schools that are under chosen – there are now more choices. There should be more clarity around the difference between these programs.
- People will come to schools with high scores – we need to focus on achievement.
- What happens when you demagnetize a school? It depends on where the school is – in Fuquay-Varina the folks will tell you that it was a mistake to demagnetize Lincoln Heights ES. What about Wiley or Root? If a school is surrounded by 500k to 1 million dollar homes, then it won't fail when the magnet is removed.
- There may be a way to remove funding – if it's based on the percentage of f/r students served, then a school like Wiley would eventually not receive much magnet funding at all.
- If the magnet principles aren't being addressed anymore, because those issues no longer exist at a school, then it should no longer have a magnet.
- Removing a magnet should be a gradual thing – it allows the school to continue to serve the students that are attending because of the magnet program.
- Use the magnet programs to attract folks that would not go to specific areas – to those schools. Given how some schools do have more resources available to them (via parents), use a sliding scale to deliver resources to schools.
- You are not helping kids in poverty with anything unless you are helping them achieve – it's an achievement problem.

- Where there are high concentrations of low achieving kids, there need to be more resources.
- In the real estate community, there is a lot of concern about how to explain to folks coming in that there is no way to guarantee any choice or location. It has been a concern for some time, with such high growth and frequent reassignments over the years. It's harder to explain now – that there is choice, but no choice is guaranteed.
- Any analysis of the magnet program needs to address the impact to the students who are being displaced.
- Question 5 is key – set the criteria and apply it. None of the other questions are “begged” by answering this question, and many problems are solved.
- It seems as if magnet programs are being used as a crutch for the system. At a non-magnet school, parents have heard, “If you want more for your gifted child, you should seek out a magnet school/program.” It's not just that it's not available at the school my child attends in this part of the county (Apex); it's that it's not available at any of the four choices that I have.
- No – rather than focus on a programmatic offering, increase the quality of principals, instruction in classrooms, etc. Bring appropriate resources to schools that need them (not money only, but also mentality)
- Business development depends on a successful school system as a whole – not just high performing individual schools. But Knightdale obviously needs a magnet – and why then is that? Does that mean making any school that has 75% f/r a magnet?
- As discussed in #1, look at making under enrolled schools magnet schools.
- Can consider additional magnet schools, but do not want to create more watered down magnets, or those which are not serving the community and or stated goals of the magnet program. First, consider if existing magnets are currently serving their stated purpose, and that stated purpose is resulting in a waiting list for that school, expand in that area.
- Vertical integration, ability to follow program from elementary to high schools
- Check geographical locations to see what areas need a magnet/choice selection
- If being a magnet would be a way to improve enrollment at under-enrolled schools, then we would like to offer more magnet options. The goal is to fill the empty seats in our schools, and then work to ensure student achievement in those schools.
- Consolidate number of themes/programs and strengthen
- Evaluate implementation of magnet program in relation to objectives
- Maintain percentage of magnet seats at magnet schools within the new choice plan so programs aren't diluted
- Expand highest demand magnets
- Split on need for more magnet – some yes, some no
- Money for magnets – is this really the time?
- Maybe look at location of the magnets to be sure they are spread out
- If academies are cheaper than magnets can we “academy” a school rather than magnet
- Can we define the difference between magnet and academy?
- Bottom Line -- \$\$\$
- How many magnet schools are in Cary? 1 – Farmington Woods. At first thought, yes – Cary needs more magnets. But that may not be the easy answer.

- What does capacity and enrollment look like in Cary schools? Weatherstone is under enrolled...because Farmington Woods pulled kids there. And now Weatherstone is a STEM school, and Kingswood did not get a STEM program.
- If the program at Bugg is so popular (100 more applications than they can accept every year) why not have other creative arts magnet programs? The demand is there for that.
- Couldn't every school have some enriched department? Rather than enriching every department at some schools, enrich one department at more schools. A challenge may be finite teacher resources – finite teaching time. If you offer something as enriched, you begin to take time/positions away from other areas.
- Is there a way to use virtual courses/offerings to increase what students can take?
- Let the choice model and the academies run for awhile and let the economy continue (hopefully) to improve then consider more magnets
- Public Relations – difference between all these school choices – magnets, academies, etc. – application = magnet and academies = no application – costs of all of these special programs, magnets, etc.
- Principals should have input and ability to create programs that meet the needs of their students, regardless of magnet status.
- Excellent principals will create schools that will attract families. WCPSS needs to devote resources to recruit, retain, and cultivate excellent administrators.
- When considering new magnets: Which programs have a successful track record? Are we seeing results in student achievement? Also – where do the elementary magnet programs feed into? How can we create continuity across magnet schools at different levels?
- Magnet schools should be used to attract families to under-utilized schools.
- The need for more schools should be based on the principles
- Identify low performing, high poverty areas in the county and evaluate the possible reasons for school fitting that criteria
- This is time for evaluation but hold off on change because of the number of changes currently happening
- Take consideration into location for magnet programs
- Cost of Transportation
- Maybe more magnet “programs” before increasing number of magnet “schools.”
- May consider more magnet schools/programs for currently under-enrolled schools
- Is there a demand for more schools to become magnet schools?
- Yes, but it is isolated demand. The objective on utilization - consideration should be first given to leadership and internal issues at the school.
- All goals are not equal for all schools. One factor may be a heavier reason to magnetize a school.
- One of the challenges with more magnets - applications have increased every year until this year. Elementary magnets decreased significantly - and this assignment plan drove the most dramatic decrease in magnet elementary applications in the history of magnet programs in WCPSS.
- More families now are applying as proximity instead of magnets. How feeder patterns played into # of applications.

- Feeder patterns affect applications. Parents may commit to ES magnet but not for HS magnet.
- Under this choice plan you are locked into a K-12 feeder which took choice away that parents used to have to go back to base.
- Stability of feeder patterns are driving parents' choices to apply or not to apply.
- Grade progression of stability - because both magnet and proximity have k-12 stability.
- Increasing number of magnets and sustaining them also means more local funds for magnets. More tax \$ in one spot. Accountable to public at large that this is everyone's pot of \$ with more magnets in the rim.
- 1% of magnet funds need guidelines as to who becomes a magnet
- Eastern Wake and Walnut Creek as excellent potential for magnets.
- We have magnets in eastern Wake - but folks are not driving and committing to apply there. Do they have a healthy draw area / pool of applicants?
- MSAP will fund changes in programs - significantly revising.
- GT magnets in new assignment plan - Zebulon ES and MS don't get same priority to HS GT program. How are we going to attract applicants if we don't see a K-12 program feeder?
- Magnet programs in WCPSS have been the success of this district. Decline in applications at ES is alarming. Feeder patterns matter - current assignment plan locks parents in programmatically. There is a need for more magnets beyond something quantifiable.
- Computer said there were only 7 seats available discouraged parents from applying at all levels. Didn't appear to be a lot of choice at middle and high school when the computer indicated 5 or less available seats.
- Difference in programs e.g. GT or IB. Are all students participating in program? Yes, IB/MYP is whole school and GT all students sign up for electives. AG is a subset program. GT is whole school via the electives that all students have access to.
- We diversify the hallways and not the classrooms. Diversity in the classroom drives what is happening to students and the quality of education.
- underutilization of school - many nods of agreement
- Unstable enrollments
- Rim schools - have dealt with unstable populations for last 4 years (Jeffrey's Grove, Lynn, Leadmine) 3 charters competing for students
- the special programs added over last 2 years to the rim schools and their attractiveness has increased
- lots of turnover at rim schools now with the new assignment plan
- What is impact on older, downtown magnets if we open a magnet rim school?
- Another GT school would draw applicants no matter location
- How do we communicate that they are going to have a different educational experience at a magnet but not a better one than traditional schools. We can't lose that message to attract applicants.
- Huge concern for rim schools.
- Add the word magnet to the end of a rim school name and it becomes immediately attractive

- Stark contrast at magnets and lots of electives and base schools without extra programs. MS students at traditional schools do not have the rich elective offerings. The schools are good - but perception is non-magnet schools are suffering and there is a gap we need to address. Listen to public and people have magnet envy with the 30 years of lack of programs in traditional schools.
- We still look at magnet schools through 1982 glasses. There is poverty everywhere. N. Raleigh has high poverty schools.
- David Krakow report from Brown University. 30 years ago it may have worked to have magnets in the center - but now we need rim schools to draw folks at the county line in (Dillard Drive, Athens, etc)
- Using magnet program to mitigate pockets of poverty. Where is \$ coming from to schools like Walnut Creek? Poverty drives location of future magnets.
- Use existing facility in an area that would make sense. May not be a school building - but an existing building turned into a school.
- There are pockets of underutilized schools. Use a flex space to implement 21st century skills. Look at what we have in the county to retrofit an existing building to accommodate an innovative program.
- Not at this time. We should evaluate what we have right now. Continue monitoring achievement in magnet schools and proximity.
- Consideration should be given to add magnet programs in the future to other towns such as Fuquay, Zebulon, Knightdale, for example.
- Consider looking at schools struggling to meet their achievements to converting them into magnet schools.

Innovative Themes/Programs

- Possible business/entrepreneurship (business internship; classroom for 3 days, going to office for 2 days)
- Engineering
- Service
- Integrated Science
- Classical Studies (inquiry based, reading, communicating, writing, justify with evidence)
- Language immersion
- Engineering
- BioTechnology
- Law/Leadership
- Health
- Technology
- Poll parents to see where needs lie
- Focus on 21st century skills,
- Teaching the child as a whole learner, life skills
- What careers are our graduates choosing? Use that information to create magnet theme.
- If we added a school, I would love to see a true fine arts elementary!! Could survey the base population.

- Traditionally the most popular magnet schools are those with academically gifted programs.
- Expanded programs should be: leadership magnet, IB, and GT.
- They have to support career and college readiness
- Language emersion schools, STEM schools, or other cooperative schools w/university or corporations that build partnerships and provide funding
- More biotech offerings
- More STEM
- More creative arts offerings
- More magnet “programs” for high schools in technical/trades fields (even with the new CTE high school)
- Perhaps magnet programs to serve needs of students with intervention concerns (not special education but underachieving)
- While it may be challenging to name the program, there may be need for more schools that serve students with unique learning needs.
- Increase early college programs that offer smaller schools for high school students not comfortable with the large high school setting.
- Consider having a middle school focus on technology in one of our existing middle schools.
- **QUESTION #3:**

What factors should be considered in removing themes/programs from magnet schools?

- Factors when removing themes/programs:
 - \$\$\$\$
 - Capacity
 - Under or over enrollment
 - If you can’t serve/enroll your base because of magnet seats....?
 - Impact on other schools – what’s the ripple effect i.e. if you remove the magnet and people leave, how will that affect nearby schools
 - Draining the life out of the school that is losing the magnet
- Need a good PR firm first.
- When it does not support the other programs within the current magnet program...Joyner Spanish Language, which does not have a feeder path through middle and high
- If move toward a more community focused magnet program, reduce programming for those not in support of that mission
- Use data to drive decisions
- Not meeting objectives
- Not meeting capacity
- Can a school meet objectives while losing its theme?

- Themes need to be aligned with where education is heading; 21st century skills, technology, career focused, etc.
- If objectives are met within the proximity population, then perhaps the magnet school program could be considered for removal.
- Need to look at the domino effect of the student population and where they would go...
- Demographics of neighborhoods and the impact on the school if the program were to be removed.
- (Lincoln Heights ES and Apex ES were magnets once – now demagnetized.
- If you pull magnets, the fear is that student performance will fall.
- How much has the county done to examine/study what successful magnets are doing? (Some magnets to a better job of integrating base and magnet populations than others.) Implementing this top-down from the district level would be more difficult.
- It happens on a school campus with strong leadership.
- Increasing the focus on classrooms – rather than on schools – would be a welcome shift.
- If move toward a more community focused magnet program, reduce programming for those not in support of that mission
- Demagnetize if magnet is no longer needed to accomplish the 3 principles
- Making the magnet theme an integral part of the mission so that the theme eventually is self sustaining
- Once school is at capacity, the purpose for the magnet is no longer needed, but mission still continues if implemented long enough
- Re evaluate the programs that schools are offering overall. When the demographics shift, the need increases/decreases, then craft the school's program offering to reflect current needs.
- Are they meeting the program goals? Does a school still need the program to meet goals?
- One factor to consider: If the school does not have a similar magnet theme that it feeds into at the next level, students do not have continuity of program offerings.
- Student achievement: Magnet program is not producing student achievement → Change theme, revise to keep program offerings current, or remove.
- Under enrollment should be the primary consideration in removing themes (factor in WHY)
- Access to the schools themselves
- Once the school area or community is high in poverty, we should remove the magnet program.
- Yes, some nods of yes. Broughton should have been demagnetized. Graduated under 18% of students in IB Diploma Programme. Student outcome was not worth monetary investment in the program. The program was no longer needed to keep the school healthy. Use of magnet funds to run a magnet program that was no longer needed.
- Broughton and Daniels did not have a high number of magnet students to begin with. If a school can sustain population with base/proximity without program then it doesn't need to be a magnet.
- Wealth of neighborhood is a factor to demagnetize - 1 person. Should not have a magnet in a wealthy area.
- downtown is highly evolving - there is a change

- Having a child at a magnet as a status symbol is more than attending there because of the program.
- You want every school in WCPSS to be attractive. Enloe has been a magnet forever - when is enough, enough.
- There is a lot of work to make magnets attractive. A lot of sustained work to make sure Enloe and other magnets are continually attractive.
- How do we do in terms of Poe's applications....be careful in looking at Poe and get rid of magnet program. Montessori has not been well understood. It's not a program where you can hop in and out of. Can't make sweeping judgment on magnet program changes.
- Fine line between when magnets have had enough and when are we punishing success. Be careful when saying (Carroll) is magnet and then 8 years from now they are drawing too many applicants. Then we de-magnetized them because they are too attractive.
- Broughton was the worst demagnetization decision because they kept their program. It is wrong to have something like that because families can't apply to it. As we guide magnet placement, de-magnetizing should be thought out very carefully and have a 5 year phase-out plan....and then not continue the program after phase-out plan.
- Some schools were in bad shape before they became magnets. Is there a chance that a school could revert back to what it was before it became a magnet? Study the area around it before making demag decisions.
- Joyner tore down apts across the street...built nice homes...changed neighborhood population. Wiley accepted less than 5 new students in the past due to overcrowding at the base level.
- Don't demagnetize because the magnet program is working...like Enloe. However, if the neighborhood has changed then that is a considerable factor.

• **Question #4 (Chamber of Commerce Groups only):**

Do you think "Curriculum Enhancement" schools such as Global Studies, STEM schools, immersion schools etc. have an effect on parent decisions involving choice?

- It does beef up the curriculum at schools. We're not sure if it'll dilute magnet choice.
- The county will have to make some hard decisions about what they are and are not going to support.
- The magnet program should not be a victim of needs/choices for high achieving kids.
- We should be talking about enrichment rather than gifted programming – we should be talking about developing specific skill sets.
- Offer fewer magnets – and expand offerings for kids everywhere.
- The district needs to have more clarity in how they explain these programs – you don't want to cannibalize your magnet communities.
- Why not drop the word magnet? They are special programs, and every school should have a special program. So there would be a creative arts network, and a STEM network, and a global schools network. And multiple schools within each network.
- There should be more of any one magnet program – not just one language immersion program, but three. And the number of programs should be based on demand.

- Yes. Offering a curriculum enhancement program will deter parental choice of magnet programs in the downtown area. If there's something special near home, parents won't choose special programs further away from home.
- The reason some of the most popular – historically – magnet programs aren't as popular now is because there are so many more choices for parents to choose from. Are magnet programs still worth it if there are so many more choices outside of those, and if those choices are popular ones driving parent choice.
- Enhance the magnet program – grow the curriculum enhancement program – join the budgets. Magnetize different departments – some school have one magnet department, some schools have give magnet departments. The groups of magnet schools are divided among how many departments are magnetized at each school.
- Broughton IB – aren't the parents still providing IB funding for that school? Verify this.
- The goal ought to be for every school to provide academic challenge for the standard course of study. These types of programs may muddy the water a bit regarding this original goal.
- If there is huge demand for some magnet programs (with very, very long wait lists) then we should be magnetizing other schools with these programs.
- The proliferation of curriculum enhancement programs is creating some confusion – the goal is to create differentiated opportunities – but it's creating competition among community schools, and possibly undermining some schools' ability to draw their proximal populations.
- A contributing factor may be – that principals are empowered to market and advertise their own schools. This is a new thing, and we won't know for a bit how this will play out.
- No. They haven't reaped the rewards – it only matters if it changes the performance of the school.
- Don't believe that parents know the difference between curriculum enhancement programs and magnet programs.
- Lots of attention is being paid to low performing kids – and they are showing more than a year's progress in a year. But our high achieving kids are not showing a year's progress in a year.
- What if all magnet funding went to supporting the curriculum enhancement program?
No magnet schools and many, many more curriculum enhancement schools

• **Question 5:**

Please share with us any other comments about magnet programs in WCPSS.

- Still some concern – will anyone cross the Neuse? In the 80s, people did go downtown – and there were significant concerns and negative perceptions about downtown Raleigh.
- There's nothing inherently problematic about setting seats aside
- We'd like to see some objective analysis as to how seats are set aside at any magnet school.

- A ½ cent sales tax will be on the ballot this fall to support transit. Which is more important – transit or education? Shouldn't that 50 million dollars support education?
- There should be a longer term, deeper analysis of the magnet program. There needs to be some criteria for the long term regarding magnetizing and demagnetizing schools.
- Have teachers been asked to weigh in on this?
- School funding, in general, is deficient. And that's being generous. There needs to be a huge increase in school funding.
- There are magnet schools with 22% poverty levels – and they are receiving more resources than schools with 45% poverty levels. Resources should go where they are most needed.
- We need to understand this in terms of cost across district, such as what we are spending on STEM and Global schools as well as the high poverty schools we are creating such as Walnut Creek.
- We are missing so many creative opportunities for types of programs offered in WCPSS. Humanities magnet (liberal arts), Civic Engagement/Citizen magnet.
- More GT and AG - can't go wrong with that theme.
- New theme schools and how they play into magnets. Differences in experiences at a STEM/Global schools and at magnet schools. Schools that have programs and not everyone have access to them.
- One of the things that needs to happen at all schools is professional development on routing and placing children in AG classes. This is not a one shot orientation but rather a continuation process for all teachers (tenure or not tenure). Identify low income and minority students for AG - this is a huge problem in our district.
- WCPSS is a very affluent county and city. For a very affluent county our teachers and students get very little.
- Great concerns for new leadership academies where parents pour \$ into schools....T-shirts for dancers, HS are funding 34 sports and parents are funding so much of the extras. Office staff at schools haven't had raises. How can we keep attracting great people? Look carefully at adding when we have trouble funding what we already have.