

Fayette County Public Schools
Magnet Schools Assistance Programs Grant (MSAP)
Voluntary Desegregation Plan

FCPS District Profile

Fayette County Public Schools serves 42,051 students. Student demographics breakdown as follows: **5%** Asian, **23%** Black, **21%** Hispanic, **7%** Two or More Races, and **43%** White. Additionally, **17%** of students are English Language Learners (EL) and **51%** of students qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch. FCPS district has 70 schools, including 13 magnet programs.

Since 1990, magnet schools have been an essential part of FCPS' efforts to reduce or prevent minority isolation and increase school/academic options for students and families. Magnet schools are a pillar of FCPS's improvement strategy throughout the entire district. Magnet schools are also a crucial mechanism to promote and extend equity to targeted students and families. Specifically, FCPS magnet schools:

- Reduce and prevent racial group isolation;
- Provide robust, innovative, and culturally responsive curriculum for all students;
- Provide a context that engages diverse students in a shared learning community;
- Provide students with access to curricula and instructional practices that prepare them to achieve their infinite potential.

Fayette County Public Schools was granted unitary status by declaration of U.S. District Court in 1972 which was affirmed by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1973 and has established a voluntary desegregation plan to continue its efforts toward racial and socioeconomic desegregation. FCPS magnet schools have successfully reduced minority group isolation (MGI) in many schools across the district. However, as our neighborhoods evolve and school populations change in tandem, we are once again seeing increased minority isolation and racially/ethnically divided schools. Community population projections also suggest that many schools are at risk for MGI in the next few years. As a result, our district has recommitted to addressing factors that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout all schools in FCPS. This commitment is evidenced in our strategic vision, "A New Way Forward," which places diversity and equity as the bedrock of our institutional values. These values are the cornerstone of the district's vision.

Definitions

Minority refers to a group of people that is either small in number or that has little or no access to social, economic, political, or religious power within a given society.

Minority group isolation occurs in contexts where the population of a minority group is so **substantial** that it precludes or reduces exposure to other racial/ethnic groups.

FCPS defines *minority group isolation* as the variation of a single minority group in excess of the district average by **10%** or more.

The Board of Education of Fayette County does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity), genetic information, or

disability in its programs and activities and provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Plan of Action

To mitigate MGI in schools, FCPS will apply targeted efforts of creating and expanding magnet schools to promote a balanced demographic composition with the goal of mirroring district demographics. This goal will be achieved by addressing systematic barriers and opportunities for historically marginalized groups, closely monitoring school demographics, implementing high-yield magnet programs with innovative instructional strategies, and applying targeted marketing and recruitment efforts for magnet enrollment. Furthermore, we will implement accountability measures and reporting systems to evaluate and monitor diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the school environment. The expansion of our magnet programs in FCPS is one strategy toward meeting our district vision which includes reducing racial isolation and removing barriers to equitable school access for all students and families.

FCPS will use multiple criteria to determine the course of action toward reducing MGI. Chief among those is student enrollment. Specifically, current and projected enrollment data which may suggest a school meets our definition of MGI or is at risk for MGI in the near future. Other criteria may include individual building structure capacity. These data points will be used to identify additional high-leverage opportunities to address desegregation goals that serve at least one subgroup that is significant enough to be at risk for MGI.

District-wide Magnet School Enrollment Procedures and Protocols:

Fayette County Public Schools currently boasts 13 magnet programs that provide theme-based instruction and serve as opportunities for demographic distribution. The following describes our district procedures and protocols for advertising programs, selecting students, and notifying parents.

Advertising: The district notifies all Fayette County residents about application availability and processes when the application window opens each year. The application period typically occurs during the first three weeks of January.

- Notices are disseminated to residents via email, website, take-home letters, internal newsletters, and other school and district social media. District representatives also make appearances on local news programs.
- All communications are translated into our community's seven most frequently spoken languages. Our website, application forms and FAQ documents are also available in those seven languages.
- Documentation is strategically distributed to specific locations (e.g., community centers and particular elementary schools) that serve targeted student populations. This is one way in which FCPS intentionally recruits a diverse student population for magnet programs.
- Districtwide events are hosted to provide first-hand learning opportunities for families to gather information about different programs.

Student Selection: Admission to all FCPS magnet programs is lottery based. The following describes our protocols for student selection.

- The application window for magnet school admission is open throughout the month of January.
- When the application window closes, FCPS staff review applications to determine eligibility.
- If the number of applications exceeds the available seats, eligible students will be randomly selected via a lottery system;
- FCPS uses three notification categories: Accepted, Declined, or Waitlisted.
- The following students will receive priority acceptance:
 - Students that are already attending the magnet program;
 - Applicants that are siblings of students currently enrolled in the magnet program;
 - Students who are transitioning from a magnet program (e.g., elementary) to a magnet school with the same theme at a higher grade level (e.g., middle);
- When the available seats are filled, eligible students who were not selected through the first lottery will be “Waitlisted” in priority order;
- As seats in magnet programs become available, seats will be filled with eligible students from the Waitlist;
- If the Waitlist becomes depleted during the school year, FCPS may open a contingency window to accept late applications.

Parent Notification: Parents are notified of their child’s acceptance status via email or text message in early March.

This plan will **reduce** or **prevent** minority group isolation throughout Fayette County Public Schools.

The Fayette County Public Schools District Board of Education,

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2023

Dr. Demetrus Liggins, Superintendent
Fayette County Public Schools

Tyler Murphy, Board Chair