

Board of Education - 2010 Guiding Principles

Our Guiding Principles for Student Assignment are based on our Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs and Commitments; our Theory of Action; and input from the community.

The Mission of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is to maximize academic achievement by every student in every school. Effective school-based leadership and teaching, differentiated staffing, and equitable and differentiated allocation of resources as expressed in Policy ADA (Equitable Distribution of Resources) have the greatest potential impacts on individual student learning. In addition, an effective student assignment plan can contribute to positive, supportive learning environments. The Board of Education is committed to creating such environments.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Board of Education commits to these Principles for student assignment issues and to the decision-making rubric to guide our Superintendent and staff.

Home Schools

Home Schools are the foundation of our academic instruction delivery model. Since accomplishing our mission requires that every home school maximize student achievement, home schools are our first priority when making student assignment and operational decisions. Every student will be guaranteed an opportunity to attend a home school within proximity to where he/she lives.

Magnet Schools

Magnet Schools (Full and Partial) offer students opportunities for learning outside the assigned home school in environments that combine three characteristics:

1. A track record of consistently high student achievement
2. A track record of narrowing achievement gaps at a rate that exceeds the aggregate rate of home schools
3. One or more of the following: an academically distinct program, demonstrated innovation in creating high academic growth, and/or a student population that is distinctly more diverse than neighboring home schools.

Stability and Predictability

In order to generate and sustain community support, the student assignment plan must provide students and families with stability and predictability. To that end, the Board of Education commits to the following:

1. The Board shall consider current and future population growth, potential demographic shifts, and other factors in order to create assignment patterns that are sustainable over time.
2. The Board shall consider undertaking a comprehensive district-wide review of the student assignment plan every six years.
3. The Board reserves the right to make changes to the assignment plan on a localized basis due to the following factors: the opening and/or closing of schools, overcrowding, or underutilization. With the exception of situations deemed to constitute an emergency threat to the safety of students and/or staff, the Board will notify students and families of potential changes no fewer than nine months in advance and will approve any decision no later than November 15 affecting the school year beginning in the following calendar year, while striving to provide more ample notice whenever possible.

4. The current sibling guarantee that includes meeting eligibility requirements for magnet programs remains in effect.

Diversity

The student assignment plan will reflect the demographics of the school feeder areas in order to create diverse learning environments that better prepare students to live in our increasingly diverse country and to compete successfully in the global workforce.

Effective use of Capital Resources

The student assignment plan must be cost effective and make efficient use of our facilities and transportation resources. We will develop a facility use policy that includes overcrowding and underutilization, as well as alternative teaching delivery methods to maximize student achievement while reducing facilities and transportation costs.

Decision Matrix

While the Board will be mindful of our Mission, our commitment to Equity, and all aspects of our Guiding Principles when making student assignment decisions, only certain components currently can be measured objectively. Therefore, in order to provide fact-based starting points, the Board directs the Superintendent and staff to include the following prioritized decision-making rubric in any proposed changes to the student assignment plan.

1. Home Schools – Proximity will be based in priority order on:
 - A. travel distance from home to school,
 - B. keeping entire neighborhoods assigned to the same school (staff shall use its discretion in considering commonly accepted neighborhood boundaries, zoning decisions, covenant agreements, HOAs, etc) and
 - C. to the extent possible, keeping whole elementary zones intact in middle and high school feeder patterns.
2. Stability and Predictability – the likelihood that the proposed assignments may be sustained over a period of time without adjustment.
3. Diversity – consideration for creating a relative balance of economically disadvantaged students (EDS), with the understanding that there is currently a predictive link between poverty levels and achievement gaps.
4. Effective use of capital resources – the total projected operating and replacement costs of facilities and transportation resources over a defined period of time.

Community Involvement: Along with our commitment to these Principles, we call upon our community to join us in preparing our students to become productive citizens. For all our students to succeed, they need the support of more than just the CMS staff. Students, families, community members and groups, businesses, philanthropic groups, and other governmental bodies must become more aware of how their decisions impact students and join us in making educating all students a top priority. We call upon our entire community to act now to support individual students and schools.