

**Board of Education Guiding Principles**  
**Comprehensive Review of the Student Assignment Plan**  
**March 22, 2005**

Our focus must always be improving student achievement for every student in every school. We will provide the leadership, resources, staffing, safe environment and innovative programming necessary for all schools to succeed. We do not believe that the problems faced by low-performing schools can or should be solved through student assignment alone.

For the review of the student assignment plan, we establish the following guiding principles:

1. The student assignment plan must provide our students and families with stability and predictability to the extent possible. This will require careful consideration of both expected growth patterns and additional schools planned for the area before home school boundaries are established.

Home school boundaries will be changed only in accordance with a predetermined schedule or when necessary because of the opening of new schools.

New schools in high growth areas will reserve capacity for future growth. Consideration will be given to placing special/alternative programs in new schools to utilize seats until needed for growth.

2. Every student will be guaranteed a seat in a school close to home. There will be no capping of schools for students within the home school area. Home school zones will be logically drawn, compact and contiguous. To the extent possible, the boundary lines for such home school zones will incorporate whole neighborhoods, anticipate growth, and make efficient use of facilities.
3. We will make effective use of all of our school buildings. Determination of capacity must consider the need for room for differentiated staffing and special needs programs. We will consider smaller schools, schools within schools, innovative scheduling and different grade configurations as methods to utilize schools efficiently.

We will develop a school overcrowding policy.

4. We believe that a diverse educational environment enhances learning. Therefore, diversity should be fostered, although it should not be forced.

We will focus on strengthening schools in naturally diverse areas.

5. Magnet programs should be strengthened. Magnet schools should offer academically distinct programs. Ineffective magnet programs should be eliminated, and additional strong magnet programs should be considered. Magnets should be strategically placed to make effective use of facilities and offer reasonable access to students from all parts of the county.

Magnet programs should offer diverse learning environments.

Consideration will be given to establishing prerequisites and/or merit-based admission to some magnets.

Consideration will be given to establishing magnet zones which will not allow a student to choose a magnet outside of his or her zone.

The sibling guarantee should be maintained except for programs with merit-based admission.

6. The student assignment plan should be simplified. Relevant costs and benefits of the plan must be carefully weighed, and costs should be reduced if at all possible. Transportation costs and travel time for students should be minimized.

The sibling guarantee should be maintained.

Consideration will be given to reducing the size of the non-magnet zones and eligibility for transportation.

Because actual non-magnet choice options have been limited, consideration will be given to providing non-magnet choice only through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and a staff-operated transfer process for open seats.

7. To the greatest extent possible, students with disabilities (EC) and students with limited English proficiency (LEP) will be offered the same assignment opportunities as other students.