

Community Engagement Forum

Harding

NOTE: Issues and clarifications are not listed in priority order unless indicated within each guiding principle.

Guiding Principle 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 required by 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 use seats until needed for growth.

Issues	Clarification	S	U	G
1. Logical boundaries that make sense to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more focused effort to ensure that neighborhood students attend neighborhood schools • Lack of diversity 			
2. Socioeconomic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of neighborhood schools • Tension between logical boundaries diversity 			
3. Formula for school utilization (% capacity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated formula (needs to be straightforward) • Classroom capacity size – old vs. new 			
4. Ripple effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeder patterns • Limit the number of times communities can be re-assigned during a certain timeframe 			
5. Bus routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time of pick-up and drop-off • Bus routes not sensible 			
6. Development of magnet programs shouldn't draw students from other programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEM impact (drawing students from other math/science programs) 			
7. Stability (to include magnet schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't replace magnet students who leave (stability for all schools) 			
8. When boundaries are altered				
9. Quality of schools				
10. Notification of boundary changes				
11. Re-evaluation of magnet locations				
12. Impact on lottery system				
13. Stable K-12 feeder patterns				
14. Setting limits to the number of students				
15. Quality schools and teachers for all students				
16. Transparency (impact on magnets – closing of schools and programs)				
17. Early community involvement in decision-making				

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Guiding Principle 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.

Issues	Clarification	S	U	G
1. ★All schools need adequate resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students should receive the same resources • Adequate resources are needed for student success • Should a school’s ability to obtain adequate resources be dependent on the source of the resources, regardless of the school’s location? (Some schools have more resources than others.) • More resources are needed for students with greater needs • Teacher qualifications are not monitored consistently from school to school. • Need better student enrollment forecasting • Opportunities for extracurricular and enrichment activities needed at all schools • Equal course offerings needed from school to school • Home schools don’t always include magnet options/special programs 			
2. ★Need for qualified, high-quality teachers at all schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many low-quality, inexperienced teachers in low-performing schools • Teach for America – don’t have enough classroom management experience 			
3. ★Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational experience is heightened for all in a diverse environment • Offer more choice programs that increase diversity • Currently there are schools without diversity (forced segregation) • Charlotte neighborhoods are not naturally diverse 			
4. ★Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk zone may not be safe • Forced to go to home school because working parent transport child to magnet shuttle stop 			
5. ★Overcrowding				
6. ★Strong school leadership needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals 			
7. Proximity to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t split neighborhoods 			
8. Lack of community connections				
9. Restrictions on freedom to choose school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want choice about where my child goes to school (with transportation) 			

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Issues	Clarification	S	U	G
10. Class size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard for students to learn when classes are too large • 29 students in a 5th grade class (without teacher assistant) is too many 			
11. School safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of security because of too many students (staff distracted; parent entered school without being noticed) 			
12. Parent involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have parental involvement for students to be successful 			
13. Cost				

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Guiding Principle 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 within schools, innovative scheduling and different grade configurations as methods to use schools efficiently. We will develop a school overcrowding policy.				
Issues	Clarification	S	U	G
1. Overcrowding policy developed, what is it?				
2. Overcrowded classrooms, number of students in classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student to staff ratio with/without spec. education and grade level 			
3. Are we using space effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent metrics 			
4. Special Ed and specials and elective floating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why not 'own' classrooms no moving k-5? 6-12? 			
5. How are we calculating stud in classrooms; special education, etc.				
6. Mobiles not utilized – Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average student cost mothball vs. community purpose vs. move 			
7. How is cafeteria time allotted scheduled?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long is too long in the cafeteria? 			
8. If small schools are effective, why eliminate any?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you want small schools, why eliminate any? 			
9. Why building new but also closing?				
10. When combining schools, are there other factors considered; performance of students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will they combine low/high performers? Is it based on site location? • Proximity of students? • State and national standards 			
11. Are current calculations relevant or should be re-evaluated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used for capacity of school fill before adding mobile. 			
12. Do we actively promote community use to take advantage of dollars and resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPCC, UNCC? Community gardens? 			
13. Can the utilization methodology be made more transparent?				
14. If low perform building closed what will happen to facility?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will happen to students? Whole boundary or split up? 			
15. Year round consideration? Innovative scheduling impact on scheduling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 multi-track • 4 day week • Extended day • ½ day KG. 			
16. As classroom size increase will K-3 have asst. entire day.				
17. Why neighborhood schools in spite of budget?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some desegregation 			
18. List of schools considered to be closed?				
19. Will they combine small schools?				
20. When rezoning, partial magnets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under/over utilized 			
21. Equity in curriculum aligned to facility				

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Guiding Principle 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.

Issues	Clarification	Dots	U	G
1. Equality, not diversity		11		
2. Why not forced?		7		
3. CMS Board all 'at large'		5		
4. No diversity leads to culture shock		3		
5. Transportation		3		
6. Diversity of resources		3		
7. Diverse thought		2		
8. District becoming less diverse		1		
9. West Charlotte, 90%		1		
10. Globalization for all schools		1		
11. Definition of diversity				
12. Why are we here?				
13. Magnets foster diversity				
14. Diversity is highest priority of all				
15. Division				
16. No diversity in home school				
17. Diversity goes both ways				
18. Apply county wide				
19. 'Forced' has negative connotation				
20. IB fosters diversity				
21. IB not always diverse				
22. Magnets provide options/opportunities				

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Guiding Principle 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; this would not allow a student to choose a magnet outside of his/her zone. The sibling guarantee should be maintained except for programs with merit-based admission.

Issues	Clarification	S	U	G
1. Definitions unclear/confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of magnets • Definition of effective/ineffective magnets • Definition of diverse learning environments • Costs of educating students versus transporting them • Magnet Zones 	H		
2. Equity issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnet zones don't offer all options • Programs not centrally located (perhaps in home schools) • Economic filters on access (preK and Montessori costs) • Lottery unfair • Admissions standards are over applied. • Are there racial/demographic quotas? Should there be? 	H		
3. Transportation changes (shuttle stops)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits access for students • Affects equity/diverse learning environments 	H		
4. Effective Magnets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents need a role • Admissions standards are important • Different students need different experiences 	M		
5. Budget effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakening programs • Reducing distinctiveness • Limits ability to add program • Are magnets practical, especially in today's economy? • Expensive or a bargain when compared to home schools? • Distance learning options should be expanded 	M		
6. Elementary School Magnets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should they even exist 	L		
7. Home school impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about impact magnet schools have on non-magnets • Lowering standards at magnets to make other schools look good 	L		

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Guiding Principle 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.				
Issues	Clarification	S	U	G
1. ★ Diversity MOST IMPORTANT TO THIS GROUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhoods/boundaries • Cultural, racial, economic, staff 			
2. Don't shift costs to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation @ magnets • Resources w/in the school (supplies) • Childcare ("home" & magnet bell schedules) • Testing costs 			
3. Current student assignment policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary clarity – confusing...deliberate attempt to re-segregate? • "5 mile rule" 			
4. Sibling guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be kept • Restore "grandfathering" 			
5. Lottery Process complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odds against getting competitive magnet assignment if not achieved at entry grade(s) or upon initial enrollment 			
6. Explore additional choice options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By new geographic zones (Southwest, Northeast, East) • Magnets in each zone 			
7. Location of transportation stops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we reach decisions? Process not really clear 			
8. Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home schools must be strong, especially if there are fewer options • Teacher assignment methods • Continuity of students, parents, staff, administration • Support/Communication 			
9. Public transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can CMS share cost to transport students with CATS? • Can parents pay for bus transportation? • Lack of information/knowledge 			

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Guiding Principle 7: To the greatest extent possible, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency will be offered the same assignment opportunities as those given to other students.

Issues	Clarification	S	U	G
1. ★Inclusion/class size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes too big • ESL assistants cut from the budget • EC assistants cut from the budget 			
2. ★Assessing students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be early and immediate 			
3. Tradeoff between sending kids to home school or sending them to a specialized school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation is big concern with this one 			
4. Testing students LEP students in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not valid 			
5. Lack of handicap accommodations in some schools				
6. CMS needs a newcomer academy for new arriving LEP students				
7. Faculty training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff needs to be well-prepared to address the needs of LEP students 			
8. Clustering of LEP students				

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Other concerns (from situation appraisal groups):

Group 1
1. Shuttle stop safety and financial obligation of before/after school for working parent (who is a CMS employee) are not realistic
2. Single parents will not be able to pick up students from shuttle stops; magnet schools no longer an option
3. Safety of shuttle stops
4. Concerns about the safety of students at shuttle stops and parents will not be able to pick up/drop off stops
5. Why should my child be shuttled bus to West Mecklenburg and picked up and taken to Harding H.S., dropped off after school with no way home and unsafe
6. Shuttle stops are harder for students that want a better education. The rezoning may affect their school placement and their education. The difficulty of getting to and from shuttles decreases chances for students to get better education (Harding University High student)
7. Grandfathering rising seniors with transportation and with assignment for magnet programs
8. Grandfather siblings into magnet programs
9. Making sure our issues will be valued
10. What schools - or programs - are on the "short list" for closure? Let us know now!
11. What is the underline objective for forcing students out of magnet school by not providing transportation? Is this to bring at-risk school scores up?
12. Help the community 'own' the entire system - a high school change does affect a distant elementary school
13. My concern is that I've received my transportation assignment form. Does that mean it's finalized?
14. Diversity is a value, building community, enhancing learning, strengthening schools
15. Adequate funding to meet (CMS) needs
Group 3
1. Paying for IB exams
2. Magnets and IB a huge expense, concerned about affect on neighborhood schools
3. Ability grouping (a concern) diversity in classroom.
4. Magnets/IB promote diversity?
5. Post EOG education – make it count through the last day (no more Disney videos).
Group 6
1. Data on transportation (costs, miles driven)
2. Transportation for NCLB & MCV kids
3. Transportation if "home" school achieves AYP (for Title I choice-out students)
4. How do we raise the quality of the home schools?
5. Pay for performance effects on staffing...will excellent teachers continue to be shifted to lower-performing schools?
6. Security at shuttle stops?

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Comments from the open microphone speakers:

(There were a total of twenty comments)

1. Eight parents concerned about **magnet transportation and the shuttle stops**. Many mentioned concerns about safety as well.
2. Two parents testified in support of **Olympic's small schools**.
3. Two parents were concerned about the **lack of diversity** in CMS schools.
4. One parent was concerned about the latest Board decisions appearing to **weaken magnet programs**.
5. One parent asked about the **rumored list of schools to be closed** and asked that it be made public so that parents could plan.
6. One parent was concerned about the **increasing number of Title I schools** in the district.
7. One parent complained about the **complexity of the transfer process**.
8. One parent illustrated the problem by saying we had 30 children and only 15 meals. Saying there was no optimum solution, he indicated support for **distance learning** as a partial solution.
9. One teacher stated that what was missing was **a principle for student achievement** –asked us to go beyond measuring just one year's growth, to track students beyond graduation and to use the data we have available.
10. One parent characterized the community as 'scared parents' and asked that we do a better job of **connecting** with them and informing them.
11. One parent suggested we pursue more **innovative programming** such as the dance academy with which she was familiar.