MAGNET SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Diversity • Academic Excellence • Equity

Student Recruitment Toolkit

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION · UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Magnet Schools Assistance Program Student Recruitment Toolkit

Prepared by
The MSAP Center and G&D Associates

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This publication was produced by the Magnet Schools Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center (MSAP Center) in collaboration with G&D Associates.

The MSAP Center is a technical assistance resource for MSAP grantees and the general magnet schools community. It offers tools, information, and strategies to assist in planning, implementing, and sustaining programs. The ultimate goal of the MSAP Center is to help magnet schools provide communities with educational opportunities that promote diversity, academic excellence, and equity.

G&D Associates are educational change management specialists. They provide coaching, mentoring and guidance for schools, school districts and organizations undergoing complex change. Through professional development, direct coaching, and targeted consultancy they provide methodology and structure to enable the implementation of personalized learning models.

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Introduction

This toolkit provides guidance on how to target magnet school marketing and recruitment activities to meet Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) minority group isolation objectives. Whether you intend to handle student recruitment and marketing yourself or hire someone to conduct marketing activities for you, this toolkit will help you understand the important elements that go into the student recruitment process. Be sure to share this kit with representatives of your magnet schools; as key players in the marketing and recruitment process, these team members should also know about the process and learn to use the tools.

If you hire a marketing expert, that individual or company will expect you to provide magnet school information and data, which these tools will help you prepare. Familiarity with this kit will help you manage the work, participate in analyzing the results, and make decisions about how to shape future activities.

Although your district likely has a defined time period when families can submit applications, magnet student recruitment needs to happen every day. When you know your recruitment targets, understand your audience, build assessment into marketing campaigns, and collect and analyze data, your MSAP project can achieve its goals of diversity, excellence, and equity.

This toolkit is organized into six sections:

Section 1: Define Your Objectives and Data. The first section clarifies how to identify your targets and provides a framework for the student recruitment process.

Section 2: Define Your Audience and Your Brand. This section describes how to understand and segment your prospective students and their families so marketing materials and strategies can be tailored to the targeted groups.

Section 3: Develop Marketing Campaigns. The third section explains how to create a marketing plan with objectives for each stage of the process and built-in assessment for each activity.

Section 4: Collect and Analyze Data to Inform Future Campaigns. This section provides strategies for assessing your marketing activities and using data to inform future campaigns.

Section 5: Use Action Strategies in Each Phase. In this section, you will find action strategies for targeting students throughout the recruitment funnel phases.

Appendixes. The appendixes contain tools that can help you develop and assess your marketing and recruitment activities. Appendix A contains the Student Recruitment Calculator, appendix B includes examples of completed tools (portions of which are presented as figures throughout the toolkit), appendix C has checklists, appendix D has planning tools, and appendix E includes data collection tools.

Section 1: Define Your Objectives and Data

MSAP mandates that grantee districts desegregate their schools by reducing, eliminating, or preventing minority group isolation. During the grant award process, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) approves each proposed magnet school's minority group isolation objectives, in which applicants define the racially isolated group(s) and the percentages of students from targeted racial/ethnic groups that must enroll to meet these objectives.

Know Your Minority Group Isolation Objectives

As you begin developing or revising your marketing plan, develop a clear understanding of the minority group isolation objectives that were approved by ED. Further, understand what those objectives mean in practice so school staff members have clear guidance. If you do not keep these objectives at the forefront of your marketing and recruitment efforts, you may not meet annual and end-of-project goals.

Determine Student Recruitment Targets

Minority group isolation objectives can seem abstract; make targets real by converting them into numbers of students that can be counted as they come through the door. An enrollment projection model is needed to determine targets. The student recruitment calculator described below includes a simple enrollment projection model. Your district may already use one that accounts for contexts specific to your neighborhoods. Work with your district's enrollment projection staff to help estimate enrollment targets to meet minority group isolation objectives.

Tip

Commonly used enrollment projection models include

- Cohort Survival Model
- Grade Progression Rate
- Growth Factor Model

Check with your district data office to learn more about these models.

Tool: Student Recruitment Calculator

If your district does not use an enrollment projection model, the MSAP Center has created a generic Student Recruitment Calculator to help estimate the number of students needed to meet your enrollment targets. This tool calculates the current, projected, and desired school enrollment by race/ethnicity and zoned/non-zoned students. The calculator walks you through a multistep process:

- Determine current enrollment by subgroups.
- Develop a projected growth rate based on historic enrollment data.

- Create projected desired enrollment based on the minority group isolation objectives.
- Determine the number of prospects, inquiries, applicants, admits, and enrollees needed to obtain the desired enrollment.

The Student Recruitment Calculator and detailed guidance for using it can be found in appendix A.

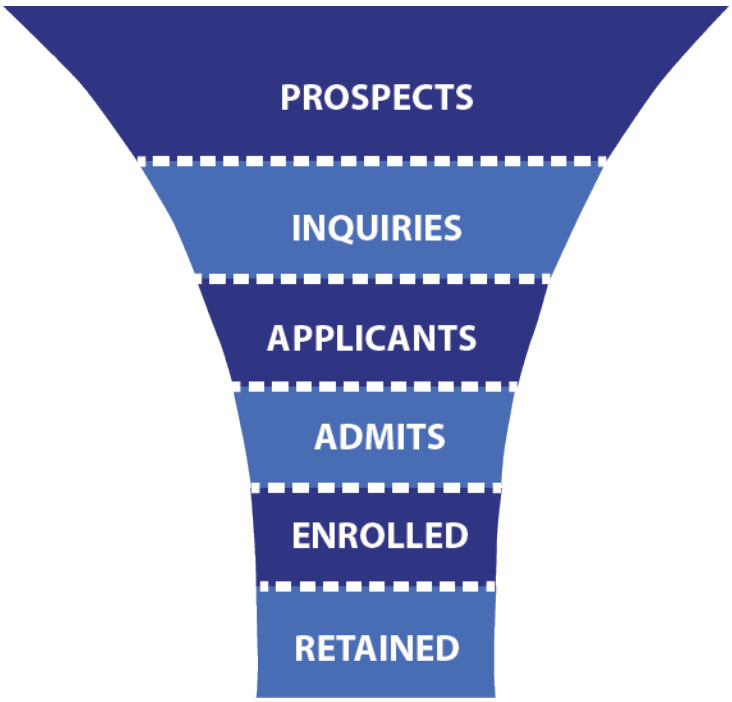
Framework: The Student Recruitment Funnel

This framework has been adapted for magnet schools from the model used by many higher education institutions, which have years of experience with marketing and student recruitment. Use the funnel framework to map the students you need to recruit to meet your objectives.

The funnel starts wide, with the goal of raising magnet school awareness and interest among a large number of prospective students. The funnel narrows as you move prospective students from casual interest to application to enrollment. To reach the necessary number of enrollees, monitor each stage closely so that you lose as few students as possible along the way.

Every contact with a student and family should have a specific call to action or a measurable task. You will provide information strategically to inform and persuade at each decision point. Track the results of each call to action, using the data formatively to determine how to maintain a prospective student's interest. Then use the data in a summative assessment to examine progress in reducing minority group isolation.

Figure 1. Student recruitment funnel



Example

An early call to action for a prospect may be to encourage a school visit, while a later one may be to have an applicant commit to attend. A measurable task could be to increase community brand recognition.

Glossary of Terms

Definitions

Prospects: The number of prospective students in each targeted group to whom you can market your school.

Call to action: The action you want a prospective family to take to learn more about the magnet school. This may mean reading an informational piece on the website, attending an open house at the school, or making an inquiry by phone or in person.

Inquiries: The number of inquiries the school receives (through e-mails, phone calls, and school visits).

Response rate: This is the inquiry-to-prospect ratio. It measures the success of your initial marketing—the percentage of prospects who respond to your call to action and make an inquiry.

Applicants: The number of students who apply to the school.

Conversion rate: This is the applicant-to-inquiry ratio. It measures the percentage of inquiries that are actually converted into applications.

Admits: This is the number of students that the school accepts for enrollment; this number may also include any new students who were not required to apply (e.g., neighborhood students).

Acceptance rate: This is the admit-to-applicant ratio. It measures the percentage of students who apply and are then accepted into the school. For MSAP schools that are undersubscribed, this rate may be 100 percent; schools that are oversubscribed will have a lower percentage.

Yield rate: This is the enrollee-to-acceptance ratio. It measures the percentage of accepted students who actually enroll in the school.

Retained students: This is the number of students who continue to attend from one year to the next. To maintain your enrollment, you want to retain as many students as possible by using effective student engagement strategies.

Know Your Data

Before you begin segmenting prospects and planning marketing strategies, you should know which data are already available. District offices may have mailing lists and demographic data that you can use. The magnet program may already have some data; the marketing assessment process will help you streamline and manage the data to make them as effective as possible.

Tip

Demographic data are also available from the U.S. Census Bureau (http://www.census.gov) and the

American Community Survey web pages (http://www.census.gov/acs/www).

Work with district offices and your magnet schools to establish a reliable system for collecting, storing, and working with data, so the information is easy for everyone to access and understand. The tools included here will provide you with options for managing, collecting, and tracking data.

Tool: Data Availability Checklist

Use this tool to identify which data are available, any information missing from the data, and the steps required for obtaining the missing information.

Figure 2. Example of completed section of Data Availability Checklist

Data Availability Checklist			
Type of data	Are these data available?	What needed information is missing from the data?	Next steps
Mailing lists	Yes, but not for homeschooled students	Racial/ethnic identifiers	Work with district database manager to discuss options for merging student race/ethnicity identifiers to mailing lists. Work to target public marketing media to families of homeschooled students.
Census	Yes	None	Create demographic maps from Census data to determine where targeted students live.
Student application	Yes	Racial/ethnic identifiers	Discuss options for getting race/ethnicity information from applicants.

Section 2: Define Your Audience and Your Brand

Before you start marketing, you need to know something about the audience you want to reach. You also need to establish an identity—a brand—for your magnet program and each school within the program. This section of the toolkit will help you segment your audience, build trust in the community, and build your brand.

Know and Segment Prospects

Once student recruitment targets have been defined, use data to describe the various groups of current and potential families that you must reach to create a desegregated, equitable learning environment. You need to know who you are targeting, what they want, and how they currently view your schools. You may have done some of this assessment already, but it is important to revisit your prospects' needs regularly.

You will classify the targeted groups so you can design effective marketing strategies that address each group's concerns. When possible, track data by race/ethnic group so you can drill down to group-specific differences.

Tip

To tailor your marketing to reach different groups of families, you may want to consider these approaches:

- translate materials into different languages;
- tailor the reading level;
- use different visuals; and
- use different media because some families may not have ready access to e-mail and social media, and may respond better to print and broadcast media, a community liaison or cultural broker, and community gatherings.

Build Trust and Relationships

Your goal is to build trust and relationships throughout each phase of the recruitment process. However, you may use different strategies in different phases.

As a magnet school marketer, you are also a public relations (PR) representative. In your PR role, you and your staff communicate clear and positive messages to the community about your magnet school's vision, goals, and successes. Of course, these messages permeate your tailored marketing campaigns, but PR has a much wider reach. Each school's appearance, the way a prospective parent is greeted at a school, what is transmitted by word of mouth—everything can affect what people think about the MSAP school. The best way to create positive PR is to build trust with students, staff, and the community. People who know about the good work your MSAP school is doing will share that with others to improve the public perception of the school.

Build trust with community members by responding to their needs and valuing their input. The community should know and trust that your magnet schools are committed to engaging with the community and providing an excellent education.

Establish Your Identity

A key component of building trust is branding, which helps you communicate with the public through the image you project. Carefully define the image and the materials that reflect it to tell community members about your magnet program and schools. This will also help staff members provide consistent information on the school's mission and successes.

Measure the effectiveness of an MSAP school brand by periodically collecting data from community members:

- Talk with current and prospective parents and students.
- Administer brand awareness surveys.
- Administer customer experience surveys to monitor current families' opinions of the school.
- Browse websites and social media to see what people say about the school.
- Conduct focus groups.
- Conduct parent, student, and staff exit interviews.

Tip

Once you create a logo, use it and apply it consistently. Create a quick guide for how to size and position the logo, what fonts to use in documents, colors that should be used in both web and print communications, where to include contact information, and any other details that will help you provide a consistent image to the public.

Tip

Include surveys in paper mailings, e-mails, and pop-up windows on your website to ensure you receive feedback from as many different people and groups as possible.

Tools: Brand Recognition and Communication

- Use the Press Release and Public Relations Checklists to assess your work with the press.
- Use the Branding Checklist to make sure all items for the brand are in order.
- Administer Brand Awareness Surveys to stakeholders to measure the effectiveness of the MSAP school brand.
- Use the Customer Satisfaction Survey to gather feedback about stakeholders' experience with the school.
- Use the Exit Interview Survey to identify parents' reasons for leaving the school, and gather their opinions about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Section 3: Develop Marketing Campaigns

Few of your magnet staff members will have experience with marketing, so work closely with them to generate buy-in and make the process painless. Because most parent interactions happen at the school level, staff members need to understand the MSAP school's mission and know how to talk positively about the magnet program to successfully recruit students. A supportive staff is important to implementing a successful marketing campaign.

Developing a marketing plan with built-in assessment for each marketing activity will help you know the school's current situation, and where it should be by the end of the school year. Keeping your minority group isolation objectives at the forefront of each marketing activity will help you ensure success and measure its effectiveness. If the MSAP school is oversubscribed, but the desired racial balance has not been achieved, then your marketing has not been successful in meeting your minority group isolation objectives. This section and the next will walk you through the process of planning and implementing marketing campaigns.

Develop Objectives and Build In Assessment

Tool: Marketing Plan

Use the Marketing Plan tool to lay out your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—SWOT—and list your marketing objectives and activities for each MSAP school. Include a mission statement for each MSAP school to help frame its marketing plan.

1. To conduct the SWOT analysis, list points under each of these categories.
    - **Strengths** are advantages or resources that make your school unique in comparison to the other schools in the area. This may include your magnet theme, community partnerships, distinctive instructional activities, diverse student body, teacher quality, or high parent involvement.
    - **Weaknesses** are any challenges you must overcome. Challenges may include lack of staff buy-in to implementing the grant, a negative school image due to low academic achievement, or lack of student transportation.
    - **Opportunities** are favorable circumstances that help you to enter the school choice market and recruit. These may include increased interest in your magnet theme, the availability of a partnership, or increased interest in school choice.
    - **Threats** can hinder your recruitment success. Threats may include a highly competitive school choice market, increasing segregation in the community, or loss of funding or a partnership.

Figure 3. Example of completed section of Marketing Plan Tool

Marketing Plan Tool

MSAP school mission: To provide an equitable magnet education.

SWOT analysis

- Strength: We are the only STEM school in the community.
- Weakness: We have a reputation in the community for low academic achievement.
- Opportunity: The community has an increasing interest in STEM.
- Threat: Another school in the community will implement STEM next year.

Phase of funnel	Marketing objective	Marketing activities
Prospects	Increase community's ability to recognize school's brand.	• Redesign logo and website. • Coordinate all materials to reflect new image. • Put up new school sign that emphasizes magnet theme.
	Increase community's knowledge of school.	• Hold informational meetings at local events, such as church gatherings and association meetings of businesses that need STEM-educated employees.
		• Discuss the school's mission, role in community, teacher quality, curriculum, STEM partnerships, and opportunities associated with having STEM education, if appropriate.
		• Distribute informational materials with call to action, such as take a school tour.

2. Based on your SWOT analysis, meet with your magnet team to identify five to seven objectives to accomplish this school year. Choose objectives that play to strengths and opportunities, and that will help you overcome weaknesses and threats. For example, the objectives in figure 3 align with the SWOT analysis. We suggest setting an objective for each phase of the funnel to help you meet your target student recruitment numbers.

3. Determine what marketing activities will help you bring in the necessary numbers of students at each funnel phase. You may have multiple activities planned to achieve one objective. As you track each marketing activity over time, you will be able to chart its effectiveness.

Definition

Marketing campaign: A series of structured activities designed to achieve a specified goal, such as increasing brand awareness or driving attendance at an open house.

Tool: Activity Calendar

Take the activities from the Marketing Plan tool and plug them into the Activity Calendar tool as presented in figure 4. Be sure to create a separate calendar for each month.

1. Schedule each activity and set goals to determine its success. Consider important school events and holidays, and plan activities around them. Document these events under the Special Notes column in figure 4.
2. Set at least one specific, measurable goal for each activity and track activity data to determine its effectiveness. Use the Activity Assessment tools to help track data.

Tip

Be realistic when setting goals. You are unlikely to receive a response from 50 percent of the people you send a mailing to. In education mailings, typically 73 percent of recipients will open the mail, and 3.1 percent will respond to your call to action. With e-mails, you might expect 36 percent of recipients to open the message, and 3.4 percent to click through to your website.

Tool: Activity Calendar

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2. Set at least one specific, measurable goal for each activity and track activity data to determine its effectiveness. Use the Activity Assessment tools to help track data.

Figure 4. Example of completed Activity Calendar Tool

Activity Calendar Tool Month: September 2013				
Completion date	**Activity**	**Staff assigned**	**Goals**	**Special notes**
Sep 1–4	None	None	None	Labor Day Holiday—Do not plan any events for this weekend.
Sep 10	Hold informational meeting at Community Interfaith Church	Jane Doe	To increase 10 or more community members' knowledge of school. To distribute informational materials with a school tour call to action to encourage five or more attendees to tour the school in October.	
Sept 30	Redesign logo	John Doe	To increase logo brand awareness to 80 percent.	

Tool: Activity Assessment

The Activity Assessment tools vary by type of marketing activity. Each tool will help you organize an activity into steps that move toward the goals set in the Activity Calendar. The Activity Assessment tool will help to track implementation progress and budget expenditures, and measure success against the goals. The tools included in this kit are for events, e-mail/direct mail, and logo redesign, but can be adapted to any type of activity. An example of a completed Activity Assessment for events is presented in figure 5.

Figure 5. Example of partially completed Activity Assessment Tool for Events

Activity Assessment Tool

Event

Activity: Hold informational meeting event at Community Interfaith Church

Goal: To increase 10 or more community members' knowledge of the MSAP school

Steps	Due date	Date completed	Budget allocated	Budget expended	Outcomes
Design invitational mailing	Aug 1	Aug 02	$500	$400	Under budget
Print mailing (500)	Aug 10	Aug 12	$1,000	$1,200	Over budget, a little late
Post invitational announce on website	Aug 12	Aug 12			
Send mailing to prospects (500)	Aug 15	Aug 15	$350	$245	Under budget
Send e-mail to those who have inquired (100)	Aug 15	Aug 15	N/A	N/A	
Create meeting agenda	Sep 01	Sep 05	N/A	N/A	A little late

Follow these steps to the complete the tool.

1. First, list all the steps that must occur for the event to take place.
2. Write in the total budget, and itemize the cost for each event expense.
3. Working backward from the date of the event, create a realistic due date for each step.
4. As the steps occur, fill in the date completed, expended cost, and outcome.
5. At the end, do a final assessment of these items to measure the entire event's success.

Assess Past Campaigns

Unless you know the effectiveness of past campaigns, it will be difficult to accurately target future campaigns. If your current marketing plan does not include assessment, take time to assess the activities that have already been implemented.

Tip

If you have connected web analytics software to your website, the tool will probably have stored data for 2 years.

Similarly, if you use an e-mail marketing program, it should have stored data on bounces, open rates, and click-through rates for past campaigns.

- Complete the E-mail, Direct Mail, Communications, Digital Marketing, and Website Checklists to assess specific types of marketing activities.
- Administer the Website Experience Survey to solicit feedback about the school's website. Also, ask different stakeholder groups to review and provide feedback on the print marketing materials.
- Review web analytics data to track activity on your website. See when website activity spiked, and if spikes coincided with certain campaigns or events.
- Record information learned from parents during conversations at events.

By completing the marketing plan tools, you have started to build assessment into your future marketing. Make sure each activity has an associated measurable goal and a way to track progress and success. Section 4 provides more information about collecting and using data throughout the year.

Section 4: Collect and Analyze Data to Inform Future Campaigns

Use the information in this section of the toolkit to collect data about the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Build assessment into each marketing activity, and use the data to modify activities as the school year progresses.

Collect Data

Think creatively about ways to integrate assessment into each campaign, using the tools we provide as well as your own. Design your campaigns to track data easily. For example,

- When sending e-mails, include the basic information in the e-mail body, and also include a link to a page on your website where the recipient can get more information. You can then track the number of recipients who clicked that link.
- When designing a series of activities to promote an event, include a unique code on each marketing item (brochure, website, e-mail, newspaper ad, etc.). Then instruct potential attendees to do something with the code. They may need to bring a piece of the marketing item that includes the code—such as an entry ticket. Or, you might send recipients to your website, where they will enter the specific code to receive a raffle ticket to bring with them. The code will tell you which marketing item the prospect responded to.
- When tracking your progress, use the Funnel Tracking Sheet for each phase of the funnel.

Example

Trigger event: Magnet students have won a local science fair—time for a positive press release! Or, a negative story about low academic achievement at one of your MSAP schools has appeared—time to subtly combat this negative perception with a newsletter promoting the research-based practices and innovative instructional methods used at the school.

New data: Tracking data show Asian families have not responded to any e-mails disseminated from the school. Stop sending e-mails to this group of families and determine a more effective way to communicate with them.

Agile Marketing

As you track a campaign, you may notice that it is not as effective as you hoped. Your marketing plan should be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions, such as trigger events and new data.

- Trigger events are external events that you may need to respond to. Marketing activities that respond to specific events or address specific concerns can be sent to everyone in your community, wherever they might be in the funnel.
- New data provide new information that can help you improve your marketing efforts.

Once you have collected data, use them to provide insights into future strategies. If certain types of activities are consistently ineffective or over budget, or both, reduce the number of those activities in the future, and increase activities that have a proven track record of success. Be sure to look at data across subgroups as well (see Define Your Audience and Your Brand), as certain groups may respond better to some campaigns than other groups do. If you are not as successful at one funnel phase as the others, look for new solutions and proven practices that can help you target students at that phase, through data and feedback from your audience.

Start Again

The marketing assessment process presented in this toolkit is cyclical. You should constantly evaluate your marketing strategies by collecting data on customer needs, brand awareness, and campaign effectiveness. Then apply the data to a new round of marketing planning, again including built-in assessment.

As you and your staff become more comfortable with assessing marketing strategies, you will hone your tools, data collection instruments, and measurable goals. As your assessment evolves, you will become ever more ready to engage in agile marketing that effectively reaches potential families and ultimately brings in the right students to meet your MSAP school's minority group isolation goals.

Section 5: Use Action Strategies in Each Phase

This section presents suggestions for reaching out to prospective families and students. As you gain experience with marketing and recruitment, you will create and add other approaches that help you meet your minority group isolation objectives.

Prospects

The initial outreach to prospects must be strong enough to grab attention and to solicit a response. This is the phase when you will implement most of your mass e-mail and direct mail activities.

Make the materials you send to prospects informative and well presented. Include a clear call to action in each, and make it easy for prospects to respond or inquire about the school. For example, in the mailing include

- your website link;
- instructions for scheduling a school tour;
- information on an upcoming event; and
- school staff contact information.

Tip

Draw students from the same and lower level feeder schools. For example, an MSAP high school should reach out to both high school and middle school feeders.

Elementary MSAP schools can reach out to families with children in Head Start and other preschool programs.

Use the information you gather about your audience to target marketing communications in a variety of formats. If you are not sure which formats are most effective, use the assessment tools in this toolkit to collect that information.

Build brand awareness in the following ways:

- Use a consistent message and share school achievements and what they mean for students.
- Differentiate the school from surrounding schools.
- Subtly address negative issues associated with the school.

If you find that your prospects are not responding (i.e., not inquiring), look at your marketing assessment data for ideas about how to tailor your marketing strategies to the needs of each market segment, and to weed out ineffective strategies.

If you do not have sufficient prospects on your mailing lists to reach your minority group isolation objective, look at who you are currently reaching, and think of creative ways to increase the number of students you reach out to. For example, you might try these activities:

- Market to students currently enrolled in charter and private schools, and students who are homeschooled.
- Visit and market to feeder schools to draw new students to the school.
- Work with other MSAP schools in your project to create the most diverse environment possible. For example, if a student in the environmental science-focused STEM magnet wants to study in a computer science-focused STEM magnet, help facilitate the student transfer to that school.

Tip

Data about students attending other choice schools (e.g., public charters and private schools) can be found on the National Center for Education Statistics website at http://nces.ed.gov/quicktables.

Inquiries

Once a prospect has made an inquiry, you should begin building a relationship. If possible, the prospect should have an assigned contact at the school, a person who provides personalized follow up and who answers questions.

- Ensure that the prospect feels that school staff members are responsive, trustworthy, and willing to address his or her needs.
- Continue to invite people who have inquired to attend school events and tours.
- Know when inquiring prospects are ready to submit an application, and keep track of the application as it moves through the process to ensure there are no delays.
- Send personalized e-mail reminders about application deadlines and other important events.

If you do not receive enough inquiries, reach out to your prospects another time using another method. Personalize your communication as much as possible.

Applicants

Monitor this phase carefully to make sure you receive enough applicants in the targeted group(s). Have additional marketing activities planned and ready, so you can implement them if needed.

Maintain a personalized relationship with applicants. Once an application has been submitted, track the application through the admissions process to ensure there are no delays.

Tip

Invite admitted students to events where they can experience the school's academics or extracurricular activities firsthand.

These activities can include theme-related field trips, week-long theme-based summer camps, or theme-based extracurricular projects.

Admits

Once you admit students, you want as many as possible to enroll.

- Continue to send the admitted families information about the magnet program and good things happening in the school.
- Follow up with each family personally.
- Invite admits to events of specific interest to them.
- Address all concerns the families may have about enrolling in the magnet program.
- Encourage admitted students to enroll.

Enrollees

Make enrollees feel welcome in the school immediately. To do this,

- Send a welcome letter from the principal as soon as the student enrolls.
- Continue to send out additional information prior to the start of the school year.
- Hold orientation meetings for parents and students, if possible.
- Continue to be available to answer questions or address concerns.

Tip

Provide opportunities for all parents to be involved in school decisionmaking. Create at-large leadership positions, particularly if not all cultural groups are represented on official committees such as the PTA.

Consider establishing a cultural broker program to encourage family engagement and deepen your relationships to neighborhood residents.

Retained Students

To retain the students you enroll, you and your staff must make students and their families satisfied with all aspects of their magnet school experience—school culture, academics, staff friendliness and responsiveness, opportunities for real-world learning experiences, and extracurricular activities. Conduct periodic customer satisfaction surveys to gather feedback overall and for each racial/ethnic group.

Engage students and families to increase retention.

- Establish systems for parents to continually offer feedback on how your school is doing.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for parent involvement—take them beyond buying supplies and refreshments and into activities that make education exciting and relevant for their children.
- Collaborate with parents of current students—especially in the targeted groups—to initiate a structured "word of mouth" campaign. By delivering the magnet message to their extended families, friends, and colleagues, parents can be a powerful addition to your marketing program.
- Create channels for students to provide input to school activities.
- Make sure all student and family needs are attended to in culturally sensitive ways, and in ways that you know they will respond to well.
- Keep families up to date on school events and successes. Send an end-of-year publication that highlights accomplishments and includes photos of students engaged in active learning.

Tip

Encourage students to participate on event planning committees, such as theme-based fairs, family nights, and field trips.

Get students to help plan school tours, and conduct them when possible.

Obtain students' opinions about the school marketing materials.

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