

Archived Information

MAGNET SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Goal: To assist in the desegregation of schools served by local educational agencies.

Relationship of Program to Volume 1, Department-wide Objectives: The Magnet Schools Assistance Program supports Objectives 1.1 (states develop challenging standards and assessments for all students in the core academic subjects), 1.6 (greater public school choice will be available to students and families), and 3.1 (secondary school students get the information, skills, and support they need to prepare successfully for postsecondary education) of the Department's Strategic Plan. The program provides financial assistance for high-quality public school choice options that are accessible to all children. The objectives are concerned with how well the program is serving the children enrolled in magnet schools and the extent to which the program is enabling public school districts to reduce racial isolation among and within schools. The program contributes to state and local systemic reforms, the provision of high-quality teaching and learning experiences, and the improvement of student achievement.

FY 2000—\$110,000,000

FY 2001—\$110,000,000 (Requested budget)

OBJECTIVE 1: FEDERALLY FUNDED MAGNET PROGRAMS ELIMINATE, REDUCE, OR PREVENT THE INCIDENCE AND THE DEGREE OF MINORITY STUDENT ISOLATION IN TARGETED SCHOOLS.

Indicator 1.1 Minority group isolation: Increasing numbers of targeted schools will *eliminate, reduce, or prevent* minority group isolation according to their individual objective.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Number of targeted schools meeting their objective</i>			Status: Unable to judge.	Source: Magnet Schools Assistance Program annual performance reports; Magnet Schools Assistance Program Evaluation. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> 2000. Validation Procedure: Not applicable. Limitation of Data and Planned Improvements: Student recruitment activities (the primary tool to meet desegregation objectives) generally occur in the spring. Since the first year grant award was made in the summer of 1998, it was too late to be used for initial recruitment. Impact of the grant on recruitment will not be seen until the second year of the grant (as reported in the year 2 performance report, summer 2000). Enrollment data from grantee performance reports have several limitations: (a) enrollment figures are self-reported; (b) grantees do not all use the same month (e.g., October) to collect enrollment data; and (c) grantees sometimes report enrollment figures at different times each year (e.g., October for the first year, May for the next).
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets	Explanation: For 1998 grantees, it is not possible to determine the number of targeted schools meeting their desegregation objective until enrollment data are available from the 1998-99 school year—the first year of this grant cycle. This data was reported in the year 1 performance reports (summer 1999). However, because these data are self-reported and not standardized, they must be compared to the enrollment data in the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data (CCD). Data for the 1998-99 school year from the CCD are lagged and will not be available until the fall of 2000. Specific objectives of FY 1998-funded schools: 11 percent of schools—prevent minority group isolation (MGI); 13 percent of schools—eliminate MGI; 57 percent of schools—reduce MGI; 3 percent of schools—prevent, reduce, or eliminate MGI in feeder school; 16 percent of schools—other.	
1998:	Data not yet available			
1999:	Data not yet available	No specific target set		
2000:		Continuing increase of schools that meet their objective		
2001:		Continuing increase		

OBJECTIVE 2: FEDERALLY FUNDED MAGNET PROGRAMS OR INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS STRENGTHEN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF ACADEMIC SUBJECTS AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR SUCCESSFUL CAREERS IN THE FUTURE.

Indicator 2.1 Improved student achievement: Students will show achievement gains in core subjects, as well as in applied learning skills, that meet or exceed the gains for students in the district as a whole.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Number of targeted schools meeting their objective</i>			<p>Status: Unable to judge.</p> <p>Explanation: Performance data are not yet available for the 1998-99 or 1999-00 school years. Virtually none of the 1998 applications provided 1997-98 baseline data because scores had not been released at the time the application was submitted. Similarly, when the first year performance reports were submitted in 1999, year 1 results were unavailable; having no year 1 scores for comparison, most grantees did not report baseline data (1997-98) either.</p>	<p>Source: Analysis of 1998 Magnet Schools Assistance Program applications; Magnet Schools Assistance Program annual performance reports; Magnet Schools Assistance Program Evaluation.</p> <p><i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Not applicable.</p> <p>Limitation of Data and Planned Improvements: Not applicable.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1998:	Data not yet available			
1999:	Data not yet available	No specific target set		
2000:		Continuing increase		
2001:		Continuing increase		

KEY STRATEGIES

Strategies Continued from 1999

- ❖ Provide technical assistance to grantees on the integration and use of the performance indicators in applications and reports.
- ❖ Disseminate information on best practices and strategies for achieving program objectives through conferences and meetings.

New or Strengthened Strategies

- ❖ To improve performance where magnet project reports indicate real or potential problems in reaching planned objectives, staff from the Magnet Schools Assistance Program will follow up with grantees regarding their plans.
- ❖ Identify and disseminate new and promising strategies for the recruitment and selection of students that minimize or eliminate the need to use race as a criterion in student selection processes for magnet schools.
- ❖ In order to have a more structured information management system, the Magnet School Assistance Program office will continue to use the data base created for the current evaluation to track grantee performance data.

HOW THIS PROGRAM COORDINATES WITH OTHER FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

- ❖ To ensure that school districts receive timely and consistent information about magnet school strategies, technical assistance is provided by the Magnet Schools Assistance Program in collaboration with the Equity Assistance Centers.
- ❖ In order to further the goal of increasing public school choice, both the Magnet Schools Assistance Program and the Public Charter Schools Program are administered from the same organizational unit.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING PROGRAM GOAL

- ❖ Many school districts are continuing to experience disproportionate growth in minority group student enrollment, making it more difficult to reduce, eliminate, or prevent minority group isolation within the school districts.
- ❖ There are few incentives and many barriers (political, social, and financial) to regional or interdistrict approaches to reducing, eliminating, or preventing minority group isolation.
- ❖ Changing legal standards constrict school districts' ability to use race as a criterion in selecting students to attend magnet programs.
- ❖ More teachers are needed with the skills to effectively teach in classrooms with children from diverse ethnic, economic, and educational backgrounds.
- ❖ The Magnet Schools Assistance Program does not have an information management system that can aggregate grantee performance reports or provide data on the program as a whole.

INDICATOR CHANGES

From FY 1999 Annual Plan (two years old)

Adjusted

- ❖ Indicator 1.1 (minority group isolation) was adjusted. The second part of the indicator (magnet programs will not have a significant adverse impact on the racial composition of feeder schools) was dropped so that in the FY 2000 plan, only the first part of the indicator (targeted schools will eliminate, reduce, or prevent minority group isolation according to their objective) remained.

Dropped

- ❖ Objective 3 (Federally funded magnet programs feature innovative educational methods) was dropped.
- ❖ Indicators 3.1 (innovative themes), 3.2 (innovative educational methods and practices), and 4.2 (vocational skills) were also dropped.

From FY 2000 Annual Plan (last year's)

Adjusted—None.

Dropped

- ❖ Objectives 2 (systemic reform and aligning standards) and 4 (innovative programs assist in desegregation) have been dropped.
- ❖ Indicator 1.2 (minority/nonminority distribution) is being dropped because there is no direct correlation between it and the statutory purposes of the program.
- ❖ Indicator 2.2 (national, state, and local reforms) is being dropped because the evidence provided by grantees in the progress reports regarding this indicator is descriptive in nature and varies widely. Performance data are therefore weak because they are self-reported and not quantifiable.
- ❖ Indicator 2.3 (state content and performance standards) is being dropped for the same reason as Indicator 2.2 above.
- ❖ Indicator 4.1 (assist in desegregation) is being dropped for several reasons: (a) this part of the MSAP program only receives 5 percent of MSAP funding and is therefore not a key indicator of the program; (b) the data necessary to inform this indicator are not quantifiable; (c) data on innovative programs would best be described in an evaluation; however, no evaluations of this part of the MSAP have been conducted and there are no future plans to do so.
- ❖ Indicator 4.2 (parental and community involvement) is being dropped for the same reason as Indicator 4.1 above.
- ❖ New—None.