

Glossary

Achievement objective—a stated goal for students to attain a specified level of performance in a particular domain of content knowledge, skill, or behavior within a designated time frame. MSAP projects must include such objectives among their performance indicators. Example: By the end of the school year, all students in grade 4 will score in the 70th percentile or higher on the state reading assessment.

Combined-level school—a school serving a grade range that crosses the common designations of elementary, middle, or high school. In this study, the category includes schools with grades K-12 and grades 4-12.

Core content areas—the four principal academic subjects: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (including history and geography)

Desegregation objectives—the statute-defined purposes of reducing, eliminating, or preventing minority isolation in schools that underlie MSAP-funded programs

Desegregation plan—a document that establishes a method for reassigning children or faculty in order to remedy the illegal separation of minority group children or faculty in the schools of an LEA, or a plan for the reduction, elimination, or prevention of minority group isolation in one or more of the schools of an LEA

Elementary school—a school that most commonly serves grades kindergarten through grade 5. In this study, the category includes schools serving grades as high as 8 if they also serve grades lower than 4

Eliminate minority isolation—a desegregation objective for minority-isolated schools that aims to reduce minority enrollments to below 50 percent of total enrollment (that is, for the school to cease being minority isolated)

Feeder school—for this evaluation, a school from which students are drawn to attend a magnet school; that is, a school that “loses” students to a magnet school that serves the same grade level. (Note that this differs from the more common definition of *feeder school*—a school from which students are drawn for the next level of schooling; for example, the K-5 elementary school which students attend before moving on to grade 6 in a middle school.)

Grantee (district)—a school district (or consortia of districts) that received MSAP funding in FY 1998

High school—a school that most commonly serves grades 9-12. In this study, all high schools in this category either have grades 9-12 or are adding those grades incrementally

Innovative practices—instructional and organizational approaches that have been examined in the scholarly literature on high-performing schools, and for which some evidence has accumulated on the relationship between the approaches and student achievement; the specific practices that MSAP projects consider to be innovative

Local Education Agency (LEA)—a public school district or education center serving students in some or all of grades K-12. MSAP grantees include both individual LEAs and consortia of LEAs

Magnet program—the curriculum, instructional strategies, and activities that support the theme or focus of the magnet school and set it apart from other schools. A magnet school can have one or more magnet programs.

Magnet project—a district-sponsored effort that promotes desegregation by offering one or more individual magnet schools or programs within the district

Magnet school—a public elementary or secondary school or public elementary or secondary education center that offers a special curriculum capable of attracting substantial numbers of students of different racial backgrounds

Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP)—a federal program that provides financial assistance for school districts or local education agencies to develop or expand magnet school programs designed to promote the reduction, elimination, or prevention of minority group isolation and quality instruction. MSAP is authorized by Title V of the Improving America's Schools Act and has supported magnet programs with grants to 171 school districts since FY 1985.

Middle school—a school that most commonly serves grades 6 through 8. In this study, the category includes schools with grades no lower than 4 and no higher than 9

Minority group isolation—a condition in which minority group children constitute more than 50 percent of the enrollment of the school, as defined in 34 CFR 280.4(b)

Minority group students—includes students who are black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, or American Indian or Alaskan Native, as defined in the MSAP regulations, 34 CFR 280.4(b)

MSAP grant—federal financial assistance for magnet schools awarded through a competitive process under the Magnet Schools Assistance Program. Currently grants are awarded for three-year periods, with second and third year funding contingent on a review of progress. This evaluation is based on grants awarded for the period 1998-2001.

MSAP-supported school—a magnet school that receives MSAP funds for special staff, equipment, materials, professional development, and other assistance to facilitate the implementation of one or more magnet programs

Nonminority group—includes students who are white (not Hispanic)

Performance indicator—a measure of how well a program is meeting its goals or objectives. Used in the Government Performance and Results Act to establish a system for all federal programs (including the MSAP) to set goals, measure performance, and report the results

Performance standard—a description of what students must demonstrate, and how well, to be considered advanced, proficient, or partially proficient in academic areas

Prevent minority isolation—a desegregation objective for schools that are in danger of becoming minority-isolated that aims to keep minority enrollments from rising to above 50

percent of enrollment during the three-year project period. These schools' minority enrollment is expected to remain below 50 percent with the magnet program.

Professional development—special training for teachers and other educators that aims to extend their skills and knowledge, improve classroom instruction, and foster increased student achievement

Program-within-a-school (PWS)—a magnet program that is offered to some but not all of the students in a school (e.g., an aeronautics program for 200 students in a 1,000-student high school)

Reduce minority isolation—a desegregation objective for minority-isolated schools that aims to reduce the percentage of minority students in the school

Required desegregation plan—a plan specifying procedures for meeting the legal requirements of a court, state government, or other government agency that a district desegregate

School climate—the environment in a school that reflects the attitudes and behaviors of both its staff and students

Special curriculum—a course of study embracing subject matters and/or teaching methods that are not generally available to all students of the same age or grade level in the same local education agency (LEA) or consortium of LEAs, as the students to whom the special curriculum is offered in the magnet schools. This term does *not* include a course of study or a part of a course of study (1) that is designed solely to provide basic educational services to students with disabilities or to students of limited English-speaking ability; in which any student is unable to participate because of his or her limited English-speaking ability; (3) in which any student is unable to participate because of his or her limited financial resources; or (4) that fails to provide for a participating students' meeting the requirements of elementary or secondary education in the same period as other students enrolled in the LEA's schools.

Standards—content standards are statements of what should be included in the curriculum in particular subjects at each grade level; performance standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do

Statutory goals [of MSAP]—the desegregation goals specified in the MSAP statute: to reduce, eliminate, or prevent minority group isolation in schools

Systemic reform—efforts to create a coherent, coordinated set of state and district policies to guide schools and teachers in improving student achievement

Targeted school—the school (magnet or feeder) in which minority group isolation is to be reduced, eliminated, or prevented *as a result* of the funded magnet program

Targets—specific minority enrollment goals for schools, usually stated in terms of achieving a specific level of minority enrollment (e.g., 40 percent) or one falling within a range of values (e.g., 35-45 percent)

Technical assistance—consultation, training, or other help provided to individuals involved in program implementation. For MSAP projects, this assistance generally comes from the U.S. Department of Education, state agencies, or national and state organizations such as Magnet Schools of America.

Theme—the focus of a school’s magnet program that is integrated into some or all of the curriculum. Examples include science and technology, mass communications, language immersion, and global studies.

Voluntary desegregation plan—a documented strategy that a district is voluntarily implementing to reduce, eliminate, or prevent isolation of minority students in its schools. For districts operating under voluntary desegregation plans to receive MSAP funds, the Secretary of Education must approve the plans as adequate under Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Whole school magnet—a magnet program that is offered to every student in a school