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2 classes/grade
level

Proposed Choice Program for 1999-00/ October 29, 1998

Goals:

- Creating a coherent and technically functional program that allows for
- Maximizing choice of magnet schools, while
- Fulfilling our agreement with OCR

I. Numbers/Sequence of Choices

A separate magnet lottery will be held substantially before the non-magnet lottery

- Students receiving assignment will be marked so that they are not included in the regular lottery.
- Students not receiving magnet assignments will be entered in the regular lottery

Explanation: This is required by our agreement with OCR/ it is also necessary because we will be using two sets of criteria. Doing the early magnet lottery may also increase diverse choice of magnet schools.

There will be up to three possible choices in each of the magnet and regular lotteries

- It will be possible to choose the magnet schools #'s 1,2 and 3.
- Out of zone students will be considered after in-zone in each case, and will not receive transportation, if assigned.
- Because six choices may be too many for many families, we will leave the possibility open so that no one feels slighted. We will make it very clear that we will not provide transportation out of zone.

Explanation: Those familiar with the choice program may view it as filling out two separate choice forms – each with a number one choice. This assures that no one is penalized for trying for the magnet schools. Only those magnet choosers not assigned (probably a small number) will be added to the general lottery. This should increase general lottery choosers' chances for assignment to their first choice.

Parents cannot choose non-magnet schools first and magnets second in the same lottery.

The way(s) parents would use the two lotteries is as follows:

1. **Magnet lottery.** Students who choose magnets first are assigned to all spaces available given OCR-approved guidelines.

Example/ explanation: In this lottery students can choose from 1 to 3 magnets. They just can't choose a non-magnet. If their ideal is a magnet first, a non-magnet second and a magnet third, they will be advised to choose only the first choice in the magnet lottery. If they are assigned, that's great. If not, they'll be automatically entered into the regular lottery for their second choice. If they get it, fine. If not, they'll get another non-magnet assignment and be able to get on wait lists for their first and second choice. They may also ask to be on the wait list for their third-choice magnet.

2. Regular Lottery: Students whose first choice is not a magnet go through this lottery in which they may have up to three non-magnet choices.

3. Wait lists and post-lottery choice. Students participating in the lotteries will be able to go onto wait lists for choices in either, or both. It may be that there are still magnet spaces left and students who didn't participate in that lottery because they wanted a non-magnet school as their first choice (and either didn't get it, or did get it and changed their minds) can be assigned right away.

Explanation: We figured that the only way we can reasonably blend the requirements of OCR on magnets with the Board guidelines on the other schools is to have a three step process of 1) magnet lottery, 2) regular lottery and 3) wait lists for those assigned to a school they do not wish to attend.

II. Magnets as Defaults.

Magnet schools will not serve as defaults in the non-magnet lottery. They may serve later on in the choice cycle, when assignments are manual.

III. Timing of Lotteries

The magnet lottery must be held enough in advance of the regular lottery that there is time to call OCR and have them give technical assistance. If we assume this takes up to 3 weeks, we have to run the magnet lottery in early to mid-February in order to run the regular lottery at the end of the first week to the beginning of the second week in March.

We briefly considered moving the deadline back (to early April, or later). The issue was how many students would we lose by having a later date. Because it is not possible to determine this number from existing data, and because of our commitment to market the magnets, for this year we will maintain the early deadline. Ideally, popularity to magnets and progress in the construction program will steadily increase the number of first choice assignments and also confidence in putting all your eggs into the school-choice basket. This would allow us to have a later date.

IV. Wait Lists

We are in agreement that we will no longer have a written, ordered list, but rather a pool from which we will draw when a space opens. The wait list will consist of 3 different pools:

- In zone students who got their applications in before the first deadline.
- All other in-zone students.
- Out of zone students, regardless of date of choice.

How will be students be selected for placement from the wait list pool?

- Magnet Schools: Names will be pulled and if there's not a negative impact beyond permissible standards they will be assigned.
- Non-Magnets: We can keep on pulling until we get what we need.

V. Use of geographic bands as a lottery criteria:

- They will be used only for magnet schools lottery and wait lists.
- They will be used as race is now. That is, we will set capacities based upon student population district or zone-wide. According to our agreement with OCR we can set geographic-band capacities.
- As with race, they will be based upon actual data (choosers and choices).

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