

Appendix D

*Grantee Screening Protocol—
Module C: District School Choice Coordinator
Interview*

Conversion Magnet Schools Evaluation

Grantee Screening Protocol— Module C: District School Choice Coordinator Interview (2004 Grantee Cohort)

April 2007

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INTRODUCTION

Interviewer: *Begin each module with this introduction. If the official has responded to an earlier module, just indicate the goal and expected duration of the module now being administered.*

Good morning [or afternoon], I am _____, with [the American Institutes for Research/Berkeley Policy Associates], a research firm in [Palo Alto/Oakland, California]. We are doing preliminary work for a Department of Education research study on the relationship between magnet programs and the academic achievement of the students who attend them. The study will focus on elementary schools that used funds from Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) grants to introduce new magnet programs beginning in 2004 or 2007. As a first step, we are contacting all of the MSAP grantees with new magnet elementary schools to determine whether they meet certain criteria required for the study. If these interviews show that a scientifically rigorous study is possible, we will begin a major evaluation study late this year.

Today, we need to learn about the standardized tests that have been administered to elementary students over the past several years.

You have been identified to us by [the MSAP Office/ the magnet project director in this district] as the person who can answer our questions about [topic]. A few days ago, we scheduled this appointment with you and sent you a brochure about the study as well as a copy of the questions we'd like to discuss with you. As indicated in the brochure, the answers you give us are confidential, and responses to the study's data collections will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district, school, or individual. We will not provide information that identifies respondents, students, or districts to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. [Interviewer: Verify that the official has received these documents and has them available to read during the interview.]

Your participation in this interview is voluntary, though of course we hope you will be willing to help us in this important evaluation for the Department of Education.

It will take about 30 minutes to go through the questions I have for you. Are you able to talk with me now? Or should we set another appointment?

Module C. Choice System Representative or MSAP Project Director Interview—Questions About the District’s School Choice and Lottery System

One part of the Conversion Magnet Evaluation will examine the effect of MSAP elementary magnet schools on the achievement of students living outside the attendance area of the magnet school who transfer into the school after it has become a magnet school. (In particular, we need to obtain an estimate of the numbers of non-resident students who gain admission to oversubscribed magnet schools by participating in lotteries.) The following questions ask about how students apply to a magnet school that is not in their local attendance area, how students are admitted from the applicant lists, and what records the district keeps on this process.

The Overall System of School Choice

1. Which of the following additional types of public school choice (beyond federally funded magnet schools) are available to *elementary school* students in this district?
 - a. Open enrollment
 - b. Magnet schools other than federally funded
 - c. Charter school(s)
 - d. Traditional busing system designed to integrate students
 - e. Other type of school choice (*Please describe*): _____
 - f. No other type of public school choice

The Application Process

Interviewer: For questions 2 through 3a, if approaches differ by school, ask for and record details for the MSAP-funded conversion magnets.

2. If a student wants to attend an elementary magnet school that is not in his or her local attendance area, how does he or she apply?
 - a. Directly to the magnet school
 - b. Through the district itself
3. Is there a date by which the student must apply for admission to the elementary magnet school(s)?
 - YES (*Go to question 3a.*)
 - NO (*Go to question 4.*)

3a. If a student applies later than this date, is he or she placed later on a waiting list for admission? If so, are students admitted from this waiting list only after all the students who applied before the deadline are admitted?

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4. Can the student apply to multiple magnet schools?

YES (Go to question 4a.)

NO (Go to question 5.)

4a. Must the student rank order the magnet schools to which he or she applied?

YES (Go to question 4b.)

NO (Go to question 5.)

4b. Does the student then get preferences of some sort at his or her higher ranked schools?

YES (Please explain): _____

NO (Go to question 5.)

The Admission Process

Decisions about who decides which applicants will be admitted to elementary magnet schools and who contacts the applicant families differ among districts. Either district staff, school staff, or both may be involved.

5. Which of the following best describes the admissions process at elementary magnet schools in this district?
- a. The central district office determines the order in which to admit students and contacts families directly.
 - b. The central district office determines the order in which to admit students, gives this information to individual schools, and then the schools themselves contact families directly.
 - c. Individual schools decide the order in which to admit students and then contact families directly.
 - d. Other (*Please explain*):

Interviewer: Write additional comments in the space below the question.

| Comments | |
|----------|--|
| | |
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6. Which of the following best describes who decides on the number of students who can be admitted to each magnet school and when this decision is made:
- a. The school determines the number of students to admit before reviewing applications.
 - b. The school determines the number of students to admit after reviewing applications.
 - c. The school and district work together to determine the number of students to admit before reviewing applications.
 - d. The school and district work together to determine the number of students to admit after reviewing applications.
 - e. Other (*Please explain*): _____

7. Because there may sometimes be more students who apply to a school than there are slots, each district must decide how to admit students. Does the district use a lottery, random drawing, or a similar randomized method to decide upon the order in which applicants will be admitted?

YES (Go to question 9a.)

NO (Go to question 8.)

8. What method(s) other than lotteries are used to decide the order in which students will be admitted?

a. First come, first served

b. First come, first served, but with preferences to certain groups of students (for example, based on where they live, their test scores, socioeconomic background, whether they applied by a deadline, etc.)

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Please Describe: | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

(Skip to question 10.)

9a. Does the district itself conduct this randomized ordering, or do individual magnet schools do this?

District

School

9b. Which best describes whether and how records of the randomized admission order are kept after each year's admissions decisions:

(1) Both schools and the district keep these records.

(2) Only the district keeps these records.

(3) Only the schools keep the records.

(4) Nobody keeps these records. *(Skip to question 10.)*

9c. How is this information on applications and lotteries maintained? Who oversees it? Is it digital? How long is it kept?

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Often school districts will divide applicants to a given school into several separate groups for purpose of admissions. For instance they often divide students by grade and make separate admission decisions by grade.

9d. Do magnet schools in your district make separate admission decisions for each grade level?

YES (Go to question 9e.)

NO (Go to question 10.)

Within grades, districts may also divide applicants into various groups and then give preferences in admission to students from some groups. (For example, the preference groupings might include students who already have siblings at the school, or groups based on geographic distance, test scores, family income, parental education, or other measures of socioeconomic status.)

9e. Are applicants to a particular grade in magnet elementary schools in your district divided into groups before students are randomly assigned to admission rankings?

YES (Go to question 9f.)

NO (Go to question 10.)

9f. For each MSAP-funded elementary school, please describe the way in which applicants to a particular grade are prioritized. For example, you might say “Siblings are given top priority, followed by students who do not have siblings in the school, with preference given to students from certain geographic areas of the city before others, and finally, inter-district transfers.”

Interviewer: Once the respondent gives a list of preference categories, ask: “Are there any other categories that are used?”

| MSAP-funded elementary school | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |

10. Please answer the following for each of the MSAP-funded elementary magnet schools. In 2006-2007, how many non-resident students in each grade (1) applied to the school; (2) were admitted and enrolled in the school; and (3) were admitted but did not enroll in the school?

Interviewer: If respondent cannot provide numbers, ask alternate questions 10 and 11 on the next page.

| MSAP School #1 | | | | | | | | | MSAP School #4 | | |
|----------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| School Name | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grade | N Applied | N Admitted/ Enrolled | Adm N Enr | | | | | | N Applied | N Admitted/ Enrolled | N Admitted/ Not Enrolled |
| PK | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | | |

11. How did these numbers change between 2004-05 and 2006-07? (That is, for each school, between the first and last year of the grant, did the number of applicants increase or decrease? How did the number of admissions for applicants change? How did the rate of no-shows change? Did the grades at which most students applied/were admitted change over time?)

| School Name | | |
|-------------|--|--|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |

10. (alternate) For the following MSAP-funded elementary magnet schools in 2006-2007, which of the following best describes the number of applications compared to the number of spaces available:
- a. In almost all grades there have been enough slots to admit all the students who apply.
 - b. In some grades there have been enough slots to admit all the students who apply, but in other grades the school was not able to admit all applicants.
 - c. In almost all grades the school did not have enough slots to admit all the students who apply.

Interviewer: Check one in each row—comment if necessary.

| School Name | | | | | Comments |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|----------|
| 1. | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | |
| 4. | | | | | |

11. (alternate) How did these numbers change between 2004-05 and 2006-07? (That is, did the availability of slots for applicants increase or decrease over the 3 years of the grant, and by how much?)

| School Name | | |
|-------------|--|--|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |

The Recruiting Process

12. Please describe the principal methods your district uses to recruit applicants for these magnet schools (e.g., newspapers, presentations at other elementary schools, internet site).

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13. Are recruitment materials and activities targeted to families in particular neighborhoods or with particular characteristics, or are they targeted to all families in the district? (Do recruitment methods differ by school?)

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14. Over the course of the past 3 years, has the district changed its recruitment strategies for any of the MSAP elementary schools? If yes, please describe.

| MSAP Elementary School | Last 3 Years |
|------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |

