

Appendix G

Feasibility Phase Brochure

CONVERSION MAGNET SCHOOLS EVALUATION

What is the purpose of the Conversion Magnet Schools Evaluation?

The evaluation is designed to produce a scientifically rigorous study that examines the relationship between elementary school magnet programs and student achievement and minority group isolation. The study will focus on schools that converted to magnet schools using federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program grants awarded in 2004 or 2007. The study will examine the academic achievement of two groups of students:

1. Children who attend the school because it is their neighborhood school; and
2. Children from outside the neighborhood who apply to attend the school because of its magnet program.

In each case, the achievement of the magnet school students will be compared with that of students not attending the magnet schools. The study will also assess the extent to which the enrollment composition of the magnet schools changed after the magnet program was introduced.

Why is the U.S. Department of Education sponsoring this evaluation?

This evaluation will provide information to Congress, the U.S. Department of Education, and the public on the relationship between one of the most common types of magnet schools that receive federal funding and student outcomes. In addition, it will make a strong contribution to the research base on magnet schools by providing research results based on rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental research designs.

How will the data be collected?

The study has two phases. During the first phase, a feasibility investigation will be conducted using information collected from districts' federal grant applications, federal and state databases, and district officials to identify districts that operate MSAP-funded schools that meet the requirements for the study and are willing and able to provide several years of student data to the evaluation. This information will determine the feasibility of proceeding to a full evaluation study. During the second phase, an evaluation will be conducted by a research team that will collect student test scores and descriptive information from the districts, and obtain information about the schools participating in the study through surveys of school principals and interviews with district officials.

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. Student data will be protected through secure data storage facilities to which only authorized analysts will have access. The research team is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of the data and is further bound to do so by federal law.

What about confidentiality?

Who is conducting this evaluation?

The American Institutes for Research (AIR), an independent, not-for-profit corporation, is conducting the evaluation in collaboration with Berkeley Policy Associates (BPA). The research is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Evaluation of the Institute of Education Sciences, in collaboration with the Office of Innovation and Improvement.

How can I get more information?

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