

School Choice Program **

1. Starting a Specialized Program or School

- a. Ideas for a specialized curriculum within an existing school or for a new school must first be presented to the superintendent, who will forward proposals to the Board with his/her recommendation. A Board endorsement would encourage further development of the concept and affirm the district's intent to assist the group, but it wouldn't imply the program's ultimate approval.
- b. The district may make staff available to coordinate these efforts.
- c. During initial stages of exploring how a specialized curriculum or program will operate, the district may provide ways to arrange meetings, distribute fliers or other written information, and otherwise assist with communication.

2. Approval Criteria

The Board will determine whether to approve a proposed specialized curriculum after considering the superintendent's recommendation. Proposals must be submitted no later than the December Board meeting for implementation the following year unless a waiver is approved. The following criteria will be used to evaluate a proposal:

- a. There must be evidence that establishment of the proposed curriculum enhances the district's educational program and vision;
- b. There must be evidence of sufficient interest among staff, parents, and students to warrant establishment of the specialized curriculum;
- c. The planned curriculum must conform to the district's graduation requirements, state academic content standards, and benchmarks;
- d. The operational plan, including staffing, proposed location, facility requirements, sustainability, support services needed, and the proposed time line for establishing the specialized curriculum must conform to applicable district policies and constitute an efficient use of district resources;
- e. The proposed budget must be appropriate to the program and must represent an efficient use of district funds.

Budget requests may include start-up costs to be paid by the district or to be solicited from other sources. "Start-up costs" are defined as those expenditures necessary to begin a specialized curriculum but which will not continue after the program is established. Start-up costs may include, but are not necessarily limited to, such items as purchase and/or renovation of facilities, purchase of an initial inventory of equipment and supplies, and payroll and travel expenses for program planning and in-service of the staff. Other than start-up costs approved for payment from district funds, the district-supported budget for a school with a specialized

curriculum shall not exceed the allocation for other schools at that level unless an express waiver is approved by the Board.

- f. The proposed criteria for selecting students for enrollment must not unfairly discriminate among applicants and must be reasonably related to the educational goals of the school and the district;
- g. The proposal's impact on existing schools within the district will be reviewed and taken into consideration during the approval process.
- h. The composition of the school would be required to be within the range of all other schools for percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunches, percentage of minority students, and percentage of students with disabilities;
- i. The Board will determine whether or not a neighborhood boundary will be established, adjusted, or eliminated.
- j. The impact on student transportation will be considered.

3. Enrollment Policies

Any district student may apply for enrollment in any school as per Board policy JC, School Attendance Areas, and accompanying administrative regulations. Applicants will be evaluated for acceptance according to the student selection criteria approved by the Board.

Staff members may utilize appropriate district funds to produce and distribute written information but shall not otherwise recruit students to apply for enrollment.

4. Review

The superintendent will review all newly approved specialized curriculum after the first year of implementation. Per its discretion, the Board will conduct periodic reviews of all schools with specialized curriculum to ensure efficient use of district resources and conformance with the district's educational program and vision.