



MAGNET SCHOOLS OF AMERICA

# Standards of Excellence Certification Program



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The certification process is based on the five pillars of magnet schools and the National Magnet School Standards of Excellence. These standards define the essential elements and characteristics of high-quality magnet programs. Community members, parents and students can be confident that each nationally certified magnet school, no matter where it is located, is held to these same high standards.

## Become a Nationally Certified Magnet School

Magnet Schools of America (MSA), the national association of magnet and theme-based schools, has created a national certification process designed to recognize the most exemplary magnet schools in the nation and help them as they continue to grow and provide high-quality, innovative curriculum and instructional programs that promote choice, equity, diversity, and academic excellence for all students. There are two levels of certification:

- Certified National Demonstration Magnet School (*exceeds the criteria*)
- Certified National Magnet School (*meets the criteria*)



## How to Apply

To become certified, MSA member schools must submit a detailed application and participate in a rigorous evaluation conducted by the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership (NIMSL).



### PILLAR ONE Diversity

#### Standard 1: Student Recruitment and Selection

All district and school based efforts for student selection including marketing, recruitment, entrance and assignment, and transportation policies, are designed to ensure equal access for all students and reduce minority group isolation.

#### Standard 2: Diversity and Equity

District and school based policies and activities to attract and retain students support racial, ethnic and socio-economic integration. All classrooms reflect the demographic diversity in the district and community, and educators demonstrate a commitment to teaching in a diverse setting.



### PILLAR TWO Innovative Curriculum and Professional Development

#### Standard 3: Theme and Curriculum Fidelity

The school's magnet theme is integrated into all subjects, monitored, differentiated, articulated between grades, and is innovative, relevant, and ensures student preparation beyond high school.

#### Standard 4: Professional Development

The school has a plan that aligns professional development to its theme, supports all students including English language learners, and those with disabilities, and includes job-embedded training. Collaboration is a structured part of regular planning.

# 3

## PILLAR THREE

### Academic Excellence

#### Standard 5: Instructional Fidelity

Teaching and learning focuses on theme-aligned instruction and researched-based design. It includes student collaboration and problem solving with tiered levels of intervention and formative assessments relevant to instruction that improves student achievement.

#### Standard 6: Student Achievement

There is evidence of academic improvement and narrowing the achievement gap for all subgroups, and the school continually collects, analyzes, and uses data to improve graduation rates and indicators of college and career readiness.

# 4

## PILLAR FOUR

### High Quality Instructional Systems

#### Standard 7: Leadership

Magnet school leadership recognizes exceptional instruction, staff is coached to ensure that the theme is implemented with fidelity, and decisions are made collaboratively. Teachers are recruited, selected, and retained, and strategic partnerships are cultivated to meet the unique needs of the magnet.

#### Standard 8: Magnet and District Relations

The district supports the magnet program in all school improvement efforts, includes them in the strategic plan, and has a pathway for themes. There is a financial plan to sustain and continuously improve magnets with latitude for decision-making and dedicated resource allocation and curriculum support.

# 5

## PILLAR FIVE

### Family and Community Partnerships

#### Standard 9: Community Engagement and Partnerships

Schools have an established process to welcome and involve businesses and organizations in decisions about theme implementation. The district supports and facilitates career-related and curriculum-focused partnerships that enhance magnet themes and benefit students.

#### Standard 10: Family Engagement and Communication

The school has an active family and parent group that is involved in school operations and student learning is showcased regularly. There are policies and practices for communication and there is a demonstrated commitment to engage families.