

St. Martin Parish Public Schools Magnet Schools Proposal



**Proposed Magnet Schools: Early Learning Center and
St. Martinville Primary School**

September 14, 2023 Draft Version

Magnet Focus

Listed below are areas that we would like for the parents, former students, and community stakeholders to focus on as we work together to develop the magnet plan and select a theme.

- ❖ What kind of school do you want your children to attend
- ❖ What relationship do you want with your school?
- ❖ How would you like to be involved in your child's school?
- ❖ What do you want your child to know and be able to do when they graduate?
- ❖ What does your child enjoy the most about their current school experience?
- ❖ What does the term "good" school mean to you? How is it different from a school that is "not good"?
- ❖ What should all students learn in a primary or elementary school?

These questions were posed at the start of our first public information meeting and they were also used as starting points for our first focus group session.

Introduction

In the effort to comply with Louisiana Law regarding admissions to the proposed Magnet School Programs in St. Martin Parish, and the applicable Court Orders in the St. Martin Parish School System's desegregation case, *Thomas, et. al vs. St. Martin Parish School Board, et. al*, St. Martin Parish School Board has developed the following draft proposal for initial implementation of a Magnet Program at the Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary Schools. **This draft proposal will be developed and completed through community input and focus groups.** If approved by the Court, the Magnet Programs would open at the beginning of school for the 2024-2025 school year. Preparations for implementation would begin immediately following approval by the Court.

The District aims to provide opportunities for students across the parish to engage in rigorous school-wide curriculum, while also being afforded the opportunity to flourish in programs of interest. Students will develop foundational skills related to the selected theme, which will be integrated into curricular and extra-curricular offerings and will not be offered at other schools in the District.

Planning Team

A planning team will include key staff members who are the decision makers for the schools and/or school system. The team includes staff representing all grade levels, subjects and disciplines (including a resource team member and staff).

Proposed Design Team Members

Name	Role	What skills does this person bring to the team?
Sarah Allen	Supervisor of Elementary Education	Experience as an elementary school teacher, principal, and supervisor of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.
Frederick Wiltz	Superintendent	Experience as an elementary school teacher, behavior interventionist, middle school assistant principal and middle school principal, supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance, Desegregation Compliance Officer and Superintendent
Dr. Gail Dalcourt	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Experience as a high school Physical Science/Applied Physics teacher, Reading Specialist, Supervisor of Secondary and CTE Curriculum, and Director of PreK-12 and Adult Education Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Practices

Corky Matthews	Desegregation Compliance Officer	Experience as a high school English teacher, Dean of Students, and high school assistant principal
TBD	Magnet Content Teachers	Knowledge of effective instructional practices and methodologies in teaching the magnet content through the Louisiana Arts Content Standards
Jessica Landry	Magnet Schools Coordinator	Experience as an early learning teacher of creative movement, CLASS evaluator, and principal of the Early Learning Center
Lisa Sylvester	Principal SMP	Experience as a special education teacher, TAP master teacher, and assistant principal and principal of St. Martinville Primary
Pamela Jordan	SPED	Experience as an elementary teacher, elementary school curriculum coordinator, high school assistant principal, middle school principal, Title I Supervisor, and Director of Federal Programs
Cheryl Mitchell	SPED	Experience as an elementary SPED teacher, assistant principal of Alternative School (JCEP), assistant principal of middle school, Louisiana Department of Education State and Regional SPED Curriculum Specialist, SPED Supervisor of Elementary Education,

Vision Statement

As schools of choice, the vision for The Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary is to:

- grow students from across the district into creative, goal-oriented, problem-solvers who experience an aesthetic awareness of the beauty and meaning in the arts and world around them
- help students to become successful citizens who embrace diversity and become contributing members of society
- provide students with opportunities for instruction that support their interests and learning styles
- integrate content from Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) practices into the core curriculum to develop higher-order critical thinking skills

Mission Statement

The mission of the St. Martin Parish Magnet School Program is to promote student interest and prepare students for success in the culturally-diverse, and technologically-advanced, global society.

Goal and Objectives of the St. Martin Parish Magnet School Program

The goal of the St. Martin Parish magnet schools, The Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary, both located in St. Martinville, Louisiana, is threefold. The program first aims to foster a diverse population falling within the +/- 15% balance in the St. Martinville area schools. The magnet program also aims to foster a robust learning environment that promotes increased student achievement that will prepare students for a diverse and competitive 21st Century global market.

Magnet schools involve incorporating a theme throughout the entire curriculum. Selecting a theme that will be exciting and attractive to the community is a critical part of designing our magnet schools.

Based on community input gathered thus far, this document refers to an example of a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics,) theme. Note that this theme has not yet been chosen and is included only as an example of a potential theme.

In addition to other means of obtaining community feedback, input has been gained through Focus Group Meetings held on August 3, 2023 at St. Martinville Primary and September 7, 2023 at Cecilia Primary. Focus Groups have been composed of a collection of racially diverse faculty, staff, and parents/guardians from St. Martinville Primary, Early Learning Center, Cecilia Primary, Teche Elementary, and Parks Primary.

**During these meetings, members of the Focus Group discussed various themes and which theme they believed was best for students. Thus far, groups have been in agreement that the District should incorporate STEAM as a Magnet Theme for St. Martinville Primary and the Early Learning Center.*

When asked about other themes:

Montessori

- teachers are not certified; this will take too long/would be too difficult to do for teachers - *participants*
- change school completely (too difficult) - *participant*

STEM

- some teachers may not want it; There are no drawbacks for students; would like to go and visit J.Wallace James Elementary in Lafayette - *participants*

Communication

- narrows the focus; this could fit in with the Arts; this could be a high school theme - *participants*

Civil Service

- more of a high school theme - *participants*

FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES - August 3, 2023

Participant Input (Characteristics of an ideal school):

A desire for more clubs, extracurricular, and creative thinking activities was expressed.

- Band, Chorus, the Arts; make schools fun; communication is missing
- Hands-on Activities; getting kids interested; visiting the planetarium/museums
- Art in the classroom/dance team/clubs make a difference; providing experiences
- Arts/Technology are a tremendous draw for parents
- Make activities during school; parents can't do anything after school

FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES/COMMENTS - September 7, 2023

- With new members present, meeting was opened with a description of what a magnet school is: meant to attract students from other schools. Goal is to get students to attend in St. Martinville. It was explained that this will be a Saint Martin Parish school.
- Input has leaned heavily towards a STEAM school (based on community input)
- Participant explained that his children go to J. Wallace. They have arts/technology/robotics/visual arts/vocal/piano.
 - Students have recitals after school
 - Instructors are professionals in the elective taught
 - Students each have a tablet and earn points by doing activities at home on the tablets (use an app)
 - J Wallace set up: students decide their track at 3rd grade or 4th grade-they have electives
 - LJ Alleman is the Arts Magnet school, Thibodeaux is the STEM Magnet
 - J Wallace has 8 electives right now. They started with art, dance, vocal/chorus
- We (District) applied for the MSAP (Magnet Schools Assistance Program) grant; a grant writing team wrote the grant application. We got calls back from OCR and the state. 15,000,000 for 5 years. 3,000,000 a year. We should have an answer by the end of September.

- Principals have to re-apply. School board has sent job descriptions for attorneys to look at. Positions go up for people to apply. Assistant principals reapply, teachers will also reapply because the job description is different. Teachers around the state/country are welcome.
- Classes should be smaller, teachers could have 2 planning periods.
- Could schools perhaps have a dedicated counselor??
- Discussed the 5 pillars of a Magnet School. It was stressed that the want is for the schools to be diverse.
- PD (Professional Development) - teachers have to understand how to connect electives to curriculum, elective teachers have to understand how to connect electives to the classroom teachers curriculum.
- Academic excellence promoted: the District wants this school to be an A school. *Want a waiting list.
- Kids who attend ELC and SMP are able to attend.
- Would love a greater family & community partnership.
- Transportation: will have a satellite pick up for Cecilia and Parks students?
- Suggestion: have a hub for Cecilia and Parks. This will be the pickup and drop off location for these students. They can offer breakfast/before school and snack/after school with homework help.
- Suggestion: start school later so that Cecilia and Parks' parents are comfortable with letting their young children ride the bus for extended distances that is not so early in the morning.
- Need a logo: suggestion: can be a contest with student input
- Lottery will happen when schools are full
- Suggestion for incentive for attending: college scholarships that are based on the electives that are selected
- A need for a marketing liaison was stressed
- December 1: application window opens? - closes January 31st (possible extension due to holiday break)
- Ideas for names discussed
- Suggestion: no sign-ups/applications with paper - need QR codes, perhaps an app, community centers that offer computers for sign up: libraries
- Next focus group: Sept 21- Parks Primary 6:00pm

A **STEAM** theme would offer choices of an expanded curriculum through the integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics into core subjects and elective courses.

**The District is still seeking community input in order to determine what the magnet schools' theme should be, and we encourage you to let us know what you think.*

The next Focus Meeting is scheduled for September 21, 2023 at Parks Primary (Multipurpose Building).

Objectives of the St. Martin Parish Magnet School Program:

1. To promote and maintain diversity across the administration, faculty, staff and student populations;
2. To provide a unique and/or specialized curriculum or approach by integrating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) components into core and elective courses.
3. To improve academic achievement for all students participating in the magnet schools or program; and
4. To stabilize student assignments.

In order to deliver a diverse school with increased student performance, the magnet programs at the Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary shall support the main goal and objectives by offering students and parents an opportunity for choice based on student interest(s).

Why was This Goal Chosen?

The St. Martin Parish School Board seeks to provide students in grades K-5 who reside within the St. Martin Parish school district exposure to innovative instruction centered around a theme that is important to the community while also focusing on the core academic classes to produce well-rounded students who are capable and accepting of the differences of others. In addition, the district seeks to integrate the St. Martinville

area schools by designing two magnet schools that will promote school choice opportunities based on interest and differences in learning styles.

Implementation of a magnet program at both the Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary School will help the efforts to bring both schools within the +/- 15% goal required by the courts. The goal is to attract students from the Cecilia, Parks, and Catahoula communities to attend the magnet programs in the St. Martinville area.

Foundation of Magnet School Programs

Magnet schools are built on the foundation of **five pillars** and are free public elementary and secondary schools of choice that are operated by school districts. Magnet schools have a focused theme and aligned curricula, are typically more “hands-on - minds-on”, and use an inquiry or performance/project-based approach to learning. They also use state or district standards in all subject areas; however, they are taught within the school’s overall theme. The St. Martinville Magnet School Programs will be built upon these pillars.

Five Pillars of Magnet Schools:

1. **Diversity** - The St. Martin Parish Magnet Schools will promote equity by creating access for all students. Through marketing and recruitment strategies, the program will support the integration of schools, resulting in a diverse population of students reflective of all cultures.
2. **Innovative Curriculum and Professional Development** - Teachers will be provided effective professional development to enhance their teaching strategies and support the innovative curricula in both core and elective courses. Core instruction will be designed from Louisiana’s approved Tier 1 curricula in the areas of ELA, math, and science. The theme content will be integrated into the adopted Tier 1 curricula in the above-mentioned areas to develop rigorous, high quality lessons based on the Louisiana Student Standards in each content area to ensure students are on track for college and career readiness.
3. **Academic Excellence** - will be demonstrated through an assessment process designed to diagnose students’ strengths and weaknesses and progress monitor growth in order to drive curricular decisions. Mastery of student standards will set the tone for high expectations for student success. The option for choice will

promote interest and invite students from across the district to join the magnet school community, thus contributing to the integration of the school population.

4. **Leadership** - is at the root of the magnet school structure and will be promoted from the school and district levels. Continuous monitoring of student progress, the effectiveness of the magnet programs, and organizational structures will ensure the success of the program. Administrators and district leaders will focus all decisions regarding hiring practices, budgets, curricula resources, collaboration, and professional development through collaborative efforts to maintain and sustain the magnet school structure.
5. **Family and Community Partnerships** - will promote shared ownership, enhance school pride, and provide a system of support for school leaders, faculty, staff, and students. These aspects of partnership will build a school environment that is community-oriented and rich in educational experiences. Partnerships between the schools and community will include a diverse group of stakeholders including, but not limited to, school and district personnel, students and parents, local businesses, policy makers, and health and human services to cultivate pride in both school and community.

Structure of the Proposed Magnet Programs

Pending Community input, The Early Learning Center and St. Martin Primary Magnet Schools will design features of a whole school K-1 and 2-5 magnet school. All learners will receive integrated instruction and activities, including the theme across the curriculum, and have an opportunity to participate in the development as the foundation for implementation during the traditional school day, afterschool, and in the summer program for the 2024-2025 school year.

Staffing

St. Martinville Primary - Principal and Assistant Principal positions will be announced after interviews for the positions have been completed.

Early Learning Center - Principal position will be announced after interviews have been completed.

Once Administrative positions are filled, the principals will work with the Magnet Coordinator & Human Resources Supervisor to recruit/hire certified teachers and qualified Magnet teachers for diverse staffing.

NOTE: A Magnet Coordinator has recently been appointed.

Anticipated Costs of Implementation

Funding the Magnet Programs

St. Martin Parish School System has hired a grant writing consulting firm to provide the district with assistance in seeking and writing grants to fund the Magnet Programs. If the district is unable to secure grant funding, funding would be secured from the district's General Funds.

After two very productive meetings with the U.S. Department of Education, updates to the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) grant were made and sent to the grant leads.

The District has had two follow-up meetings with OCR to revise areas of the MSAP Grant. A decision regarding the grant is expected in September.

Estimated Costs

Category or Items	Estimated Costs
10 Teachers plus Benefits (based on teachers with an average of 10 years' experience)	\$650,000.00
<u>Classroom Construction</u>	\$60,000.00
Materials and supplies, included by not limited to, classroom projects, show cases, exhibits, and field trips	\$30,000.00
Total	\$740,000.00

Faculty, Staff and Community Support

The faculty and staff of the Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary will sponsor parent nights at the beginning of the school year, in which students, parents, and members of the community will be invited. Students from the areas for recruitment will be invited to visit the school through field trips scheduled by their zoned schools. The district will continue to host community events to create interests in the Magnet School Programs.

Upcoming Focus Group Meeting:

September 21, 2023 - Parks Primary Multipurpose Room 6:00 PM

Professional Development

Pending the Magnet School theme selection, training/professional development will be selected.

The Magnet Schools Leadership team will plan for effective professional development to include content focused learning, active participation, collaboration, effective practice, coaching support, and opportunities for feedback and reflection.

Teachers/Staff will be provided with sustained duration of implementation stages and ongoing annual training prior to the start of the 24-25 school year; job embedded Professional development for theme integration across the curriculum will be conducted.

Area Schools Visited for Observation of Theme Implementation

Name of School	Parish	Dates Visited or To Be Visited
Forest Heights	East Baton Rouge	October 2022
McKinley Middle Magnet School of Visual and Performing Arts	East Baton Rouge	October 2022
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts (MACA)	St. Landry	February 2023
J Wallace James	Lafayette	February 2023

Proposed Curriculum for the Magnet Programs

[Subject to community input, the Magnet Plan Team will develop a description of the curriculum for the proposed magnet program, once it is developed. Emphasis will be placed on integrating Magnet Theme into state Tier 1 core curriculum. We welcome community input on this.

Recruitment of Students

The Magnet Schools Planning Team, along with members of the Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary school administrative teams, will work collaboratively to market and recruit students to the magnet programs in an effort to bring the schools within the +/- 15% balance required by the courts. The following is a list of sample

magnet school recruitment activities that could take place during the 2023-2024 school year. This list of activities is only an example and could differ depending on the magnet theme that is eventually selected after listening to community input.

Activity	Location/Purpose
District and School Social Media Outreach	The district and schools will send out information on the theme and registration for the proposed magnet schools to parents in the Cecilia and Parks areas of St. Martin Parish
Informational Sessions such as Parent Nights	Sessions will be held to inform parents, students, and members of the communities where students are being recruited with additional information about the Magnet schools
	the Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary will invite students and parents from the school community and the areas for recruiting to attend information sessions about the magnet programs
J-Calls, Newspaper Ads, Local News Stations	the Early Learning Center and St. Martinville Primary will send out J-Calls to schools in recruitment areas to increase parent and student interest in the program

Admissions Criteria and the Lottery Process

In selecting students, we will use a weighted, random selection lottery process to fill available seats which will take race into consideration but not rely upon it as a selection condition to fill seats, focusing instead on identified socioeconomic and geographic diversity to recruit students from across our four attendance zones. Pending court decisions, applications will be available at the beginning of 2024. Each application will be reviewed for completion and accuracy. If the number of applications received equals the number of available seats, all students will be accepted.

If more students apply for a grade level than the number of open slots, students will be selected by a computerized random selection lottery process using a weighting system as follows:

1. Students who qualify for a majority to minority transfer into the St. Martinville Zone from another attendance zone
2. Students currently zoned for St. Martinville who attend schools other than ELC or SMP (i.e. private, homeschool, charter schools)
3. Students with siblings currently enrolled at the school
4. Students of employees at ELC or SMP.

Notification will occur by February 28 annually. Students not selected will be placed on a waiting list. As slots become available, students on the list will be notified. Once a student is accepted, they will not need to reapply annually, but will be required to submit a Letter of Intent by March 31 annually if they wish to return to the magnet school the following year. New waiting lists will be generated annually after the random selection lottery process and letter of intent submission deadline. If a child is not accepted, they may re-apply the next year.

Enrollment/Recruitment

Enrollment will be open to all students currently attending St. Martinville Primary, Early Learning Center and any student currently attending any of our parish schools and to students homeschooling or enrolled in a private school in St. Martin Parish. We will use Family Engagement and Outreach to attract, enroll, and retain diversification of student subgroup enrollment to desegregate our target schools. Each school attendance zone will be divided into four quartiles of advantage, based on socioeconomic status, parental education, median household income, racial and ethnic composition, percentage of single-parent families, home ownership, rental, and public housing. This data will be used to set annual diversity goals to balance racial and socioeconomic diversity within our target schools.

Annual recruitment, including community outreach and media campaigns, will focus on

zones where we can best draw a diversified candidate pool from all four socioeconomic tiers allowing our project to meet our racial and socioeconomic diversity goals. Promotion and marketing will target communities with higher concentrations of non-black students and those from higher socioeconomic levels. We will disseminate culturally inclusive marketing materials using traditional (i.e. billboards, radio, tv, print) and newer media approaches (i.e. YouTube, FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram) to promote our program.

Transportation

Free bus transportation will be provided to all students who choose to attend our Magnet Schools with the possibility of satellite stops in the Cecilia and Parks communities.