

November 15, 2016
To: The Honorable David Bury
From : Willis Hawley
Re: Withdrawing Magnet Status

In January 2015, the Court established a set of criteria for determining whether magnet schools should retain their magnet status and said that all magnet schools should be both integrated by the 2016-17 school year and should meet specific academic criteria (Doc. 1753).

In the Unitary Status Plan, the plaintiffs and the District agreed that criteria for determining whether a school was integrated would include the provision that no school could have more than 70 percent of students of a single race/ethnicity. The Court recognized that it would be very difficult to integrate an entire school that was not integrated--i.e. that was "racially concentrated"--so it required that the criteria that magnet schools needed to meet would only apply to the entry grade in that school (i.e., K, 6 and 9) and that that goal should be sustained as the student cohort moved through the school.

The January, 2015 Order tasked the Special Master with making recommendations to the Court as to whether individual magnet schools and programs should lose their magnet status if they failed to meet their goals. The Special Master deferred in making recommendations in the fall of 2015 thus providing an opportunity for schools that did not meet the integration criteria established by the Court to do so the following year.

The Special Master examined magnet school enrollment data in 2015-16 and 2016-17 to determine whether the racially concentrated magnet schools had enrolled no more than 70 percent Latino in their entering classes. Six schools did not meet the criteria for integration in both 2015-16 and 2016-17: Cholla, Ochoa, Robison, Pueblo, Safford, and Utterback. See Table 1 for relevant data.

Three other schools fell short of reaching 70 percent or less of one race target: Carrillo, Drachman and Roskruge. Carrillo and Drachman have been "A" schools and have experienced some progress in moving toward integration status. Roskruge is a dual language school and dual language is a high priority in the USP.

The Special Master recommends that Cholla, Ochoa, Robison, Pueblo, Safford, and Utterback lose their magnet status this fall of 2016. There is no reasonable way to argue that these six schools met the integration criteria set by the Court.

Magnet funding for the current year may be sustained unless the District proposes otherwise through the established budget reallocation process. Future funding for the six schools will be resolved in the budget process for the 2017-18 school year.

TABLE I
MAGNET SCHOOLS ENROLLMENT – PERCENT LATINO STUDENTS

SCHOOL	K GRADE	F GRADE	ENTIRE SCHOOL
Ochoa	K	1	
2015-16	83		82
2016-17	79	76	81
Robison	K	1	
2015-16	73		75
2016-17	76	76	74
Safford	K	1	
2015-16	74		75
2016-17	75	75	77
	6	1	
2015-16	76		75
2016-17	77	76	77
Utterback	6	7	
2015-16	82		81
2016-17	74	80	80
Cholla	9	10	
2015-16	79		78
2016-17	82	80	79
Pueblo	9	10	
2015-16	86		88
2016-17	88	87	89