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Charles Patin
Kean Miller Hawthorn D'Armond McCowan & Jarman LLP
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Dear Charles;

This serves as your request to email you the information on magnet schools effectiveness as a desegregation tool based upon your evaluations of programs in East Baton Rouge, Rapides, St. John and St. James. I have taken information from evaluation reports submitted to various agencies during the past several years.

Below is information taken from the Compliance Reports for East Baton Rouge Parish School District that I submitted to meet the evaluation requirements set fourth by the Federal District Court. The first report was submitted in April 2004, and the last in July 2007. Additional data was obtained to show the impact magnet programs have on the racial composition of the schools in the district.

The District's magnet programs are intended to contribute to both school desegregation and improved educational quality for participating students.

As a result of the Consent Agreement, magnet schools and programs were started and are currently operating as follows:

Dedicated Elementary Magnet Schools

BRCVPA	Visual and Performing Arts/Academic
Forest Heights	Academic/Visual and Performing Arts
South Boulevard	Academic/ Foreign Language
Westdale	Academic

Elementary Magnet Programs

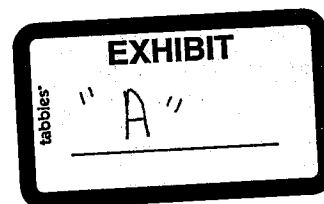
Belfair	Montessori
Dufrocq	Montessori

Dedicated Middle School Magnet Schools

McKinley	Academic/Visual and Performing Arts
Sherwood	Academic

Middle School Magnet Programs

Crestworth	Math, Science, & Emerging Technologies
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Middle School Centers of Excellence

Crestworth Project Lead the Way

High School Magnet Programs

Baton Rouge Academic/Visual and Performing Arts

Scotlandville Academic/Engineering Magnet Program

Glenn Oaks Medical Careers and Environmental Architectural Design (EAD)

Istrouma Emerging Technologies

High School Centers of Excellence

Glen Oaks Environmental and Architectural Design, Medical Careers, Automotive Technology, Construction Trades-Construction Management Programs

Scotlandville Thermal Systems, Electrical Systems, Design and Structure, Auto CAD, Computer Numeric Control, Mechanical Drives, Robotics

Istrouma Computer and Communications Technology

A dedicated magnet school is a full-time full-day school-wide magnet theme using a special curriculum. A magnet program is a school-within-a-school program offering a special curriculum or set of courses based on a theme.

During the 2004-2005 school year, magnet programs were discontinued at Nicholson and Ryan Elementary Schools. Magnet programs were also discontinued at Capitol, Glen Oaks and Istrouma Middle Schools. Beginning with the 2006-07 school year, the Visual and Performing Arts magnet program was discontinued at Broadmoor Middle School but added at McKinley Middle School.

The chart below shows the change in enrollment by race since the beginning of the Agreement.

Schools	2003-2004 Enrollment					2009 - 2010 Enrollment				
	Elementary Magnet Schools									
	Black	% Black	White	% White	Total	Black	% Black	White	% White	Total
Belfair Montessori	290	87.88%	40	12.12%	330	94	58.39%	67	41.61%	161
BRCVPA	211	52.10%	194	47.90%	405	204	50.75%	198	49.25%	402
Dufrocq Montessori	234	88.64%	30	11.36%	264	161	72.85%	60	27.15%	221
Forest Heights Academic	393	95.62%	18	4.38%	411	360	92.54%	29	7.46%	389
Westdale Academic	241	91.98%	21	8.02%	262	207	50.49%	203	49.51%	410
South Boulevard Academic	201	80.08%	50	19.92%	251	143	57.20%	107	42.80%	250
	Middle Magnet Schools and Center for Excellence									
Crestworth Math/Sci/Tech	481	97.17%	14	2.83%	495	State takeover				
McKinley Academic (2005)	595	93.11%	44	6.89%	639	631	89.12%	77	10.88%	708
Sherwood Academic (2005)	609	72.41%	232	27.59%	841	403	55.97%	317	44.03%	720
	High School Magnets and Centers for Excellence									
Baton Rouge Academic	560	47.18%	627	52.82%	1187	509	41.35%	722	58.65%	1,231
Glen Oaks Environ/Arch	777	99.36%	5	0.64%	782	84	100.00%	0	0.00%	84
Istrouma Technology	766	99.35%	5	0.65%	771	53	96.36%	2	3.64%	55
Scotlandville Engineer/Math	933	97.80%	21	2.20%	954	172	97.18%	5	2.82%	177

The Race Factor

During the four-year term of the Agreement, the dedicated magnet schools set a target student enrollment of 55% Black, 45% Non-Black. Additionally, for the first two school years, if there were not sufficient applications from Black or Non-Black students to fill the school to its intended enrollment without exceeding an enrollment ratio of 55% Black, the magnet school had to operate with empty seats. Beginning with the third year of operation, if the same conditions existed, the school officials had to admit students from the waiting list regardless of the target ratio.

During the Agreement period, magnet school officials assigned students to magnet schools using procedures whereby students were selected in a manner that ensures that the use of race was done to meet the mandates of the Agreement. Eligible students who were selected were given the opportunity to enroll at a magnet school after the application period ends.

Student Expectations and Achievement

Overall, magnet student progress was not to be specifically monitored as part of the evaluation; that is, the Agreement did not require that student performance in magnet schools exceed the performance of students in non-magnet schools. However, with such an emphasis on academics as the theme of so many schools and the term accelerated used so often in program descriptions with specific academic entrance requirements, school officials had set apart many magnet schools from regular schools. With such an emphasis, magnet students were performing and continued to perform better academically. Most magnet schools and programs have and will continue to reach an elite status.

The demographics of Baton Rouge show that a disproportionate number of students not only were not equipped and/or interested in participating in the magnet and/or Center of Excellence programs. Many of the district's schools had significant numbers of students with low tests scores that did not meet minimum state standards. School officials attempted to raise standards and carry out the state's high-stakes tests for all students. However, they remained confronted with large numbers of students who were failing these tests. As the magnet programs became more successful, they drew higher performing students away from many schools, exacerbating the problems associated with a non-magnet school's ability to meet state performance standards.

Most school reform efforts are understandably focused on creating equitable schools. The magnet schools and programs in East Baton Rouge have improved the educational system for a limited population of students. But for the larger group of non-magnet students, who make up the majority of the school system, the challenge remains to address the needs of these students.

East Baton Rouge school officials will continue to develop methods designed to change the culture of the hard-to-educate. They are setting high expectations for the harder to educate students, making attempts to engage them, selecting high-stake initiatives as an approach to teaching and setting up partnerships with outside organizations. Business, education, government, and the nonprofit sector work as a partnership to help school officials find ways to serve both magnet and non-magnet students.

I did an evaluation of the Rapides Parish School District Magnet Schools from 2001-2003 when they opened and operated six new magnet programs in the district's most racially isolated schools. Each of the programs was part of the comprehensive desegregation plan approved by

the Fifth Circuit Court in 2000. Magnet schools constituted the centerpiece of the District's total plan for desegregation.

The six Court approved schools that were the original magnet schools include: Peabody Elementary (Montessori), Rosenthal Elementary (Montessori), W. O. Hall Elementary (Math/Science), Alexandria Middle (Math/Science), Arthur F. Smith Middle (Animation Technology), and Peabody High (Professional Services, Animation Technology, Math/Science),

The Rapides Parish Public School system is a non-contiguous school system with a large diverse non-white population totaling approximately 66.80% of the students attending schools. Students are enrolled in 65 elementary schools (PK-5), 9 middle schools (6-8), 8 high schools (9-12), 1 middle/high school (6-12), and 4 special centers. The percentage figures show the racial composition for the 2002-2003 school year at the elementary, middle, high and special center schools as follows:

**Membership by Race
October 2002**

School	Total	White	% White	Non-White	% Non-white
Elementary	22,815	7,654	33.55%	15,161	66.45%
Middle	6,766	2,045	30.22%	4,721	69.78%
High	9,091	3,005	33.05%	6,086	66.95%
Special	1,482	627	42.31%	855	57.69%
Total	40,154	13,331	33.20%	26,823	66.80%

The magnet schools included in the evaluation were the most racially isolated schools in the district. During the three years of operation, the reduction in racial isolation changed significantly at Rosenthal and Peabody Elementary Schools but did not decrease significantly at W.O. Hall Elementary, Arthur Smith Middle, Alexandria Middle and Peabody High. However, after three years, the principal was replaced at W. O. Hall, and the racial isolation has been reduced significantly since that time.

I also did a report on the three-year progress (2003-2006) of the Rapides Parish School District after they modified their magnet schools. Peabody Elementary (Montessori) and Rosenthal Elementary (Montessori) continued their current magnet programs, however W. O. Hall Elementary changed their Math/Science theme to Mass Media / Communications, Alexandria Middle was changed from Math/Science to Pre Law, Arthur F. Smith Middle from Animation Technology to Mass Media / Communications, and Peabody High from Professional Services, Animation Technology, Math/Science to Law/ Mass Media/Communications. The new themes were designed to improve the ability of magnet programs to attract mostly white students into the six schools that were almost 100% African-American.

The magnet program used the thematic approach to carry out very sophisticated instructional activities whereby test scores of students in the six magnet schools improved so that none are listed as academically below state average as identified by the Louisiana LEAP 21 test results.

Below is a chart that shows the change in racial composition of all six schools evaluated over a six-year period. Enrollment figures for Rosenthal and Peabody Elementary Schools are not included because they were not included in the second three-year review period.

Change in Racial Composition of Magnet Schools in Rapides Parish

School	Theme	Theme	2000-2001		2003-2004		2007-2008	
	2001-2004	2004-2007	School Enrollment	% Minority	School Enrollment	% Minority	School Enrollment	% Minority
W. O. Hall Elementary	Math/Science	Mass Media/ Communications	223	99.10%	192	98.44%	240	82.92%
Rosenthal Elementary	Montessori	Montessori	343	94.17%	334	73.05%	n/a	n/a
Peabody Elementary	Montessori	Montessori	263	89.73%	389	58.10%	n/a	n/a
Arthur Smith Middle	Animation Technology	Mass Media/ Communications	803	89.17%	567	97.00%	501	97.60%
Alexandria Middle	Math/Science	Pre Law	686	75.80%	601	74.21%	726	80.03%
Peabody High	Professional Services/Animation Technology/ Math/Science	Pre Law/ Mass Media/ Communications	911	85.07%	688	97.38%	766	95.43%

I also did an evaluation of the St. John Parish magnet program over a three-year period for the operation of a magnet program at the John B. Ory Elementary School.

The St. John's Parish School System operated the Communications Arts magnet school as part of the St. John's Parish Board of Education's most recent effort to desegregate the district's racially isolated schools. The Ory magnet school was a modification of a Court approved desegregation plan to create magnet schools to meet federal desegregation guidelines.

During the three-year project period, project staff created a large television technology center at the Ory Communications Magnet School by converting a classroom into a television studio for the communications magnet program. Additionally, all classrooms had been wired and are networked with the media center, library, and central office.

The John Ory Communications Arts Magnet School attracted enough students to fully integrate the student body. Student achievement improved and the community remains proud of the magnet program.

The project was carried out in three phases. During phase I, the communications specialist worked with project elementary school teachers to design and develop the communications curriculum. During phase II, the communications center was created. Teachers were trained to utilize and incorporate new instructional techniques and activities using the television broadcasting equipment and materials. Training included using television as a tool to teach basic subjects and to better facilitate learning. During Phase III, teachers and school personnel used broadcasting to carry programs to the community and to promote the progress of the magnet program.

The three-year magnet grant for the Ory School was very successful. In a school system that is among the highest poverty districts in Louisiana, a state that is among the lowest in educational performance, participating children have had an opportunity unequalled in other schools through-

out the district and state. As a result, Ory developed strong school leadership and highly qualified teaching staff. The instructional program provided an avenue to make education an adventure for students while they made strong achievement gains. The grant allowed the school to improve instruction so that the racially integrated student body ranked among the highest in the state.

The St. James use of magnet schools was somewhat different. Beginning in 1992, officials from the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Justice entered into negotiations with the Board of Education to develop a new desegregation plan that would result in an improved student racial configuration for most schools. The Department of Justice and the Board of Education agreed to the creation of a middle school magnet program by closing the old St. James Middle School facility and reopening it specifically as a science and math magnet program. In 2003, the agreement was modified to provide for the development of the St. James High School magnet school designed to reduce racial isolation.

During the three-year project period, annual enrollment data at St. James High School was compared to the total student population enrolled in all the parish's high schools. Enrollment data were compared to determine the extent to which racial isolation was reduced. The St. James High School program experienced a slight reduction in racial isolation during the three-year project period.

The Math/Science magnet school was started in 2003 using local funds for a middle school of science and mathematics. The Science/Mathematics magnet program provided services students in grades 7 – 12. A total of 348 students (48.9% white and 51.1 % black) participated during the three-year review period. Over the three-year life of the project, magnet staff members created innovative ways to challenge and enhance student understanding and interest in the areas of math and science. Using the unique curriculum, teachers developed instructional objectives that met and exceed those standards and required students to utilize the higher-order thinking skills expected of magnet students. In the magnet program there has been a diverse student population and the teachers have developed lessons that meet their specific needs.

Please let me know if you need any other information.

Sincerely,



Dr. David K. Lerch