

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

MAGNET VERSUS SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

February 9, 2015

Background Information

At the Board's Work Session on January 7, 2015, questions arose related to the Budget Discussion #1-HCPS Proposed FY16 Operating Budget about the difference between high school magnet programs and signature programs.

Discussion

Harford County Public Schools has established a variety of high school programs that provide students with sequential programs of study that prepare them for college and careers related to their interests and aptitudes. Because some of these programs of study require extensive teacher training, expensive equipment and materials, unique facilities, and/or other distinctive elements that require additional resources to be successful, they are located at a limited number of sites. Some of these are magnet programs, which are defined as high school programs with a specialized curriculum that are offered at one site and are available to eighth grade students in Harford County who qualify through an application process. Magnet programs can be total-school or school-within-a-school programs for which transportation is provided. The four magnet programs offered currently to students include: the Science and Mathematics Academy at Aberdeen High School, the International Baccalaureate Programme at Edgewood High School, the eighteen Maryland State Department of Education approved Career and Technology Education Programs at Harford Technical High School, and the Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences Program at North Harford High School.

In addition to the four magnet programs, Harford County Public Schools offers a variety of Maryland State Department of Education approved Career and Technology Education Programs, many of which are only offered at selected high schools and to students in those community attendance areas. These are called signature programs. The signature programs offered currently to students include: the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Pre-Engineering Program at Aberdeen and C. Milton Wright High Schools, the PLTW Biomedical Sciences Program at Bel Air and Havre de Grace High Schools, the National Academy Foundation Academy of Finance Program at Edgewood High School, the Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Program at Joppatowne High School, and the Agriculture and Horticulture Programs at North Harford High School.

An annual review process has been established to examine the viability and relevancy of existing magnet and signature programs and to determine the need for additional programs.

Superintendent's Recommendation

The Superintendent recommends that this informational report be accepted by the Board.