



**Department of  
Education**  
Chancellor David C. Banks

**Community School District Two**  
**Kelly McGuire, Superintendent**

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October 25, 2022

Dear District 2 Community,

In late September, Chancellor Banks tasked superintendents with engaging school communities to obtain perspectives regarding middle school admissions. In his September 29<sup>th</sup> press release, the Chancellor cited the importance of establishing admissions policies that are family friendly, transparent, fair, and reward students for classroom success. Since that announcement we have participated in multiple community wide engagement events, sponsored by District 2 and the Community Education Council in which hundreds of families have attended. We have listened to families and also collected feedback in written surveys provided in a variety of languages.

While families offered a wide range of perspectives, certain issues were frequently raised. Parents consistently shared that courses that inspire and challenge children academically, school safety and climate, sibling priority, length of commute, and arts and enrichment programs were high priorities. As a middle school educator for the past 25 years, a District 2 school administrator for 17 years, and a parent, I couldn't agree more with this feedback.

My admissions proposal for Fall 2023 to the Department of Education senior leadership and the Office of Enrollment is in alignment with feedback from the community, the vision laid out by Chancellor Banks, my knowledge of District 2 middle schools, and sound research related to middle grades education. It is a plan that builds on current successes in our district and offers a long-term plan for excellence across our schools. There is a great deal of work to be done with our educators and families to ensure the success of this plan, but we have a long track record of success in our community and I know we will meet the challenge. In brief, a draft of my proposal includes the following:

- Students who reside in District 2 are eligible to apply for any District 2 middle school. There are no criteria for admission to any school.
- Every 5<sup>th</sup> grader who lives in District 2 is zoned for a middle school. Students are entitled to a seat in that zoned school.
- In 4 zoned middle schools we are establishing a new honors course in mathematics. This will begin in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and continue through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students are eligible for this honors course if they have received a math course grade of 4 (or equivalent) in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The 4 zoned middle schools that are establishing this new honors course of study are: MS 131 - Dr. Sun Yat Sen, MS 104 - Simon Baruch, MS 297 - 75 Morton, and MS 167 - Wagner MS.
- All non-zoned middle schools will offer grade level and accelerated math learning opportunities. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, all District 2 middle schools are now required to offer Regents level curricula to qualifying students in both mathematics (Algebra) and Living Environment (Science).

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Why this plan?

- This plan reduces stress related to the middle school application for families. By not having admission criteria for admission to middle schools, more options are available to students and families.
- This plan dramatically increases access and capacity for students and families seeking honors-level courses of study. Uncertainty regarding a student's eligibility for an honors program is eliminated. Families will know whether their child has a seat in the honors program in their zoned school when they apply.
- This plan addresses "scarcity" concerns. Establishing honors programs and access to Regents-level coursework in every school allows more students to participate in these curricula.
- This plan allows for the continuation of sibling priority. Sibling priority is not available if a screen / admission criterion exists for a school.
- This plan creates continuity across the district. Regardless of where a family lives, there are many middle school options and families are guaranteed admission to their zoned middle school, as well as guaranteed admission to an honors math program in that zoned school if student applicants meet the eligibility criteria.
- This plan supports families who are nervous about their child traveling a long distance to middle school. More options and programs are available in neighborhoods across the district.
- This plan supports families because it is easy to understand.

I look forward to our continued partnership in anticipation of fall, 2023.

Sincerely,



Kelly McGuire  
Superintendent, District Two

