

## Summary Talking Points

# CMS Board of Education Considering Removal of the World Language Magnet from South Meck HS in 2022 – 23

*Please see the “Full Overview” Document for more detail on the background, concerns and the recommendations.*

***Moving the World Language Magnet (WLM) from South Meck (SMHS) to E.E. Waddell in 2022-23 will not set Waddell up for success and will cause harm to the SMHS community. There will be multi-year impacts of rezoning, Waddell will face enormous hurdles in staffing the new WLM Program, it will jeopardize the success of a mature WLM Program, impact Diversity and Culture at SMHS as well as reduce Equity/Course Offerings to students at both schools.***

### CONCERNS:

#### 1. Rezoning - **This will result in at least 1500 students moving in/out of SMHS over three years.**

Although CMS is concerned about the capacity at SMHS (not a concern shared by families or the school), moving the WLM and re-aligning feeder schools does not help the capacity.

#### 2. Staffing New Program

CMS will not be able to fully staff a World Language Magnet at Waddell. Most of the teachers at SMHS would need to be retained, so Waddell will have to hire mostly new teachers.

- It is difficult to find certified, Native speaking language teachers in Charlotte Metro that meet all Magnet requirements. There is already a hardship trying to staff the new North K8 language school, currently set to open this August, as well as vacancies at S.A.I.L, South Meck and North Meck.
- CMS has limitations about paying for VISAs, which creates a hurdle in recruiting new teachers for Waddell

#### 3. Maturity of Language Magnet Program

South Meck has had the Language Magnet for over 10 years and invested a lot of time and money into building the program. ALL 3,400 students enrolled have access to the languages classes, from Level 1 to Level 7, which is unique to South Mecklenburg High School due to the investment from the administration and staff. There were over 4,200 seats in the World Language Magnet classes this year, including non-magnet students.

**It will be very difficult to rebuild the program with an entirely new staff and an inexperienced leadership team.**

#### 4. Diversity and Culture

With over 62 countries represented and the current SES (socioeconomic) makeup, South has the balance that CMS is trying to achieve for a more diverse and equitable culture, so this change is in direct conflict with these goals.

#### 5. Equity / Course Availability

**ALL students at South Meck will take a step back with equity and course availability if the WLM is moved.**

- Waddell will LOSE access to a broad array of courses (AP, Performing and Fine Arts, CTE, general electives), to play for sports teams at the school they attend (may have to go back to home school to play), and to participate in some of the 48 special interest clubs available at SMHS.
- Current non-magnet language students at SMHS will be negatively impacted with limited language options and losing the opportunity to continue beyond 2 years of language, while 3 years is required and/or preferred by many colleges and universities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

***We do not want to see a successful World Language Magnet program moved and be set up for failure due to staffing challenges and an uphill battle to build a brand new program with new staff and leadership. There are other alternatives to solving the capacity challenges at MPHS that the Board needs to consider.***

- We are proposing that the Language Magnet stays at SMHS to maintain the integrity and success of the program, ensure equity/course availability and to maintain the rich, diverse culture. This will also help limit the achievement gap disparity at South Meck.
- There are several Magnet Options that could be considered for Waddell. One of the strongest/in demand magnet opportunities is for an IB or an IB/TD program in the Blue Transportation Zone as indicated by the 2021-22 CMS School Choice Lottery results and the waitlist for IB programs.
  - Waddell and the West Side need every advantage they can have to bolster the plan the County is looking for to show progress in academic gaps. An IB program at Waddell will provide academic and ultimately economic resources through internships and business support to close academic gaps in that area.
  - Although CMS feels that an IB program at Waddell would impact the IB program at Harding, this is unlikely given that it is 12 miles north of the Waddell building, which is why families do not select it.
  - Because MPHS is a closed IB program, this further limits the IB Magnet spots for students in the Blue Zone. Waddell could help close the equity gap and fill this need and could also add an offering for TD since there is not a high school program today. This could greatly improve equity and options for students throughout the Zone who cannot get into East Meck or into MPHS due to enrollment caps.
  - An additional consideration, if numbers are a challenge, is to make this a middle/high school magnet to fill the gap at all grade levels 6-12.
- There are other high schools in the district (like Providence) that are below capacity and could be used to realign MPHS's excess capacity. Depending on the school, it may help with the diversification of their student populations, the Equity/Coursework opportunities with a larger student body and would definitely level out capacities for the schools.
- **We would recommend holding off opening Waddell until the Rezoning takes place in 2023 -24 to minimize the amount of change to all of the involved schools AND to fully assess the enrollment impacts across CMS due to families choosing different options as a result of the pandemic.**

***In summary, opening up a full IB magnet (either 6-12 or 9-12) at Waddell HS will allow the WLM to continue to be successful as well as provide equitable access to this desirable Magnet program to those in the Blue transportation zone. Leveraging a school like Providence will also solve the capacity challenges at MPHS.***