

EXHIBIT 4

May 3, 2013

From: Bill Hawley

To: Parties

Re: Proposed USP Magnet Plan

General Lessons from Previous Reviews

Two general lessons I take away from recent review processes related to the implementation of the USP are:

- When the District makes its proposals, the Plaintiffs and the Special Master then identify what they would like to know in order to do a responsible review and comment constructively. This then requires the District to respond with information that may or may not be seen as what was asked for but, in any case, involves considerable effort. Meanwhile, the clock keeps ticking. Some of the concerns could be addressed by providing the Plaintiffs with an early draft inviting comments or questions. The District did this in the case of the magnet plan but either the plaintiffs did not see this as a time for comment or, when questions were raised, the District did not have the time or resources to respond.
- The SM receives the recommendations of the plaintiffs but the District and the Plaintiffs have no opportunity to shape the recommendations I make unless I consult with them on specific items. A way to address this is for me to provide the parties with “preliminary” or “initial” comments. It would be good if I could do this, as a matter of course, on a draft. I can make initial comments on the District’s proposals, as I do now for the magnet plan.

My Initial Comments on the Magnet Plan

The Adequacy of the Plan Overall

The magnet plan (MP) submitted by the District is a plan to plan. It is not a plan. It may be that there is much more to the MP than is evident in the version shared. If so, it would be good to have a more complete and elaborated plan.

The USP is quite specific about the elements of the Plan (II.E.3). It does not seem to me that these elements were systematically addressed. Some were not addressed at all (e.g., x and xi). Most of the elements of the USP provisions should be addressed for each magnet proposal.

On pages 25 and 26 of the MP, there is a list of criteria to be used in developing the MP. This adds things to the USP's provisions (and this is good) but it does not include all of the USP provisions. Moreover, the MP does not systematically show how even the District's criteria apply.

Information relating to specific schools is uneven. An obvious example is that racial composition is provided in some cases and not others while sometimes we have information about student mobility and sometimes not. For one school (THS), the need to put coursework into the Mojave system is noted. Why not others? Or, since this otherwise provided for in the USP, why here. There are numerous other examples.

The total budget for magnet schools has been reduced from 2012-13 allocation. While the details of the magnet plan expenditures for each school are not necessary, how is it possible that the Plan could be developed without some estimates of costs. For example, there is much talk about technology. No estimates of cost? This is important because the MP makes no tough decisions about withdrawing magnet status. How can the District strengthen 19-20 magnet schools with less money, especially when so many are really weak? More on this later.

The MP provides no information about alternatives considered and why the current choices were made. It is interesting that "cultural literacy" is prescribed for PD in most schools, but not all. Are these other schools

models we can learn from? But, the USP provides that all teachers are to be proficient in culturally responsive pedagogy and money is set aside for such training throughout the budget. There presumably is no greater need for CRP training in magnet schools (note that “cultural literacy” is not mentioned in the USP). This seems a relatively minor matter but it suggests to me that the USP on this and other matters, got insufficient attention in the development of the MP.

The clock for Plaintiff review should not start until the Plan is complete. Of course, there will be disagreement about whether each provision has been “adequately” addressed because, among other reasons, we will disagree about the content of the proposals. But, that is a different matter.

The Nature of the Themes

Studies of magnet school and programs suggest that many families pay less attention to themes than to other factors. One study somewhat facetiously suggested that the three most important considerations in making decisions were location, location, location. Another study estimated that as many as eighty percent of families could not describe the unique curriculum or instructional strategies of the programs involved. What is going on here is that several things unrelated to the theme are important to families including the racial composition and the socioeconomic status of the majority of students and, though this is not the first consideration of many families, the academic performance of school. This does that mean that themes are unimportant but they need to be distinctive and well resourced and staffed. The more magnet schools you have, the less likely you will have the human and financial resources to make the schools really special.

In the era of the Common Core standards and assessment, a basic premise of magnet schools is that they must have curricula that are aligned the common core content. How they get there may be different and instruction strategies may vary (though all should have both culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant curricula). Alignment with Common Core standards will not be easy since the essence of a magnet school is that its theme is supposed to be identifiable throughout the curriculum. For

example, in a STEM magnet, reading comprehension should be taught from texts that deal with scientific principles. This content integration can start in kindergarten but it requires teacher expertise.

Themes should not deal with goals that every school—magnet or not—should have. For example, all schools should be preparing students for college or successful jobs and all should have high expectations. All should enhance the capacity of students for “systematic thinking. These are “themes” that all schools should be implementing.

I do not understand the notion that a school should be based on the liberal arts. Having been in discussions and decision making on national committees dealing with the role of the liberal arts, it does not seem to me that the MP comprehends what this involves. It certainly does not involve “traditional” modes of teaching and curriculum. The fundamental role of the liberal arts is not unlike the content the authors of the Common Core standards had in mind. This suggests that all schools should have something like the liberal arts embedded in their curricula. Perhaps the authors of the MP have another concept of the liberal arts. If so, what is it?

The District proposes as part of the dual language path, to have a school with a theme of “Spanish Immersion”. Not only is this not dual language, the particular school has a net loss of white students and a HUGE influx of Latino (or as the MP likes to call them, Hispanic) students.

I could go on. In my later analysis of each school—not today—I will comment further on the themes.

Where, by the way, is UHS? Should we assume that there is intent to eliminate its magnet status?

Prospects for Integration

The District proposes to improve some existing magnets that are now not integrated and have not been. If one looks at the data provided, it appears that some magnets are actually less integrated than that school would be if it was not a magnet—that is, the net loss/gain from the neighborhood base decreases the integration of the school. What are the assumptions about

how a segregated school will become integrated and on what evidence are these assumptions based? Will this involve big infusion of resources? Where will this come from?

In the only case of specific goals being set for a school, the MP sets a goal for attracting white students that is four times the number of whites I the school and four times the number of white leaving the school. How is this possible? What is the plan?

In some cases, the District proposes to magnetize schools or change what they are doing when they are already integrated.

The Need to Bite the Bullet on Withdrawing Magnet Status

The MP makes no proposals to withdraw magnet status. The chances that all of the currently racially concentrated schools can achieve integration is virtually zero. Moreover, many of these schools are weak academically. While withdrawal of magnet status is politically difficult, it will not get easier and continuing to support them rather than phasing them out now puts off the inevitable for another year and reduces resources to improve some magnet schools or initiate new ones.

Making difficult decisions now will open up new opportunities. For example, the MP says a computer science and technology magnet is very promising and has a good site for that school but says that it cannot be done because of inadequate resources. Given the District's limited resources, it might be best to reduce the number of magnet schools to allow a dozen or so to become really distinctive and of high quality. This could increase the overall number of students in integrated schools.

The Need for Adequate Information

As the Court pointed out in its most recent Order dealing with boundaries, the District shall provide adequate information to the Plaintiffs and the SM. This involves not only complex tables and reams of background data but the analysis of that data and descriptions of its uses in the decisions made. Below I list several matters for which I think analyzed information would

be helpful to the Plaintiffs and me. Indeed, I think such information would be helpful in the development of a MP.

1. Racial/ethnic composition of the students enrolled in magnet programs within schools.
2. The proportion of students receiving free or reduced cost meals in each school and in the cohorts leaving and attracted to the school.
3. More specificity in most proposed needs and actions.
4. Three years of data for mobility and racial/ethnic composition.
5. What was learned from the marketing survey conducted last year?
6. A map of schools that highlights magnet schools and programs as well as pathways. If feasible, the map should show concentrations of students by racial/ethnic background. Separate maps for each racial/ethnic group may be necessary.
7. What lessons can be drawn from those magnets that are successful and how can these lesson be applied?
8. What themes were seriously considered but discarded? For example, Tucson has at least two major medical centers, one of which is located near a school to be closed. Other districts have found health oriented magnets to be successful. Was this considered?

Comments on Specific Proposed Magnets

To come.

Bottom Line

For the reasons stated or implied above—and for other reasons related to specific proposals that will soon identify--the District should revise the MP in the next few weeks and resubmit it to the Plaintiffs and the SM for review and comment. This revision can be informed by Plaintiffs and SM comments. Presumably, these comments will be informed by additional information the District provides.