



The National Association of Magnet and Theme-Based Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. News and World Report Improves Definition of Magnet Schools

Washington, DC, May 17, 2018 — Last week we were thrilled to see how many magnet schools were among the top schools across the country in the *U.S. News and World Report* Best High School rankings. If you looked at their rankings of magnets, though, you may have seen that the magazine used a narrow definition for magnet schools, focusing on selective admissions criteria rather than specialized theme-based curriculum and instruction.

Following our outreach to the editors, the definition has been updated and we are encouraged by this change. The rankings are an invaluable tool that helps the American public understand their wide range of educational options, and having an accurate representation of magnets is an essential part of that.

"Upon reviewing the previous description of magnet schools, Magnet Schools of America (MSA) felt *U.S. News and World Report* was not providing a complete picture of magnet schools today," said MSA Executive Director Todd Mann. "In our view, the description led the reader to believe that magnet schools use only selective admissions criteria to attract students, rather than using theme-based programs to appeal to students from different neighborhoods and backgrounds. Furthermore, in reality, we know a large majority of magnet schools use randomized lotteries for admissions purposes."

Now, and for annual rankings to come, the *U.S. News and World Report* definition of magnet schools will more accurately reflect the 4,340 magnet schools that operate in communities across the country. The new description can now be viewed on this year's [magnet high school rankings](#) and below.

New Description of Magnet Schools

Magnet high schools are public high schools that offer specialized courses, often designed around a theme. Any student in the designated region can attend, which causes most magnet schools to use a lottery system to accept applicants. Some magnet schools use an application process that involves test scores and GPAs.

Congratulations once again to all our members who are featured on this prestigious list, and thank you to *U.S. News and World Report* for responding to our concerns.

About MSA – Magnet Schools of America (MSA) is a nonprofit education association that was founded in 1986. It represents approximately 4,340 magnet schools serving nearly 3.5 million students. MSA supports and serves the leaders and teachers of magnet and theme-based schools, while promoting the development of new magnet programs and public schools of choice.

For additional information, please visit www.magnet.edu or contact John Laughner, Legislative and Communications Manager, at communications@magnet.edu