

Some Facts About AISD Magnets

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AISD has a strong tradition of offering choice programs, which include the magnet schools. AISD currently has three magnet schools: the Liberal Arts & Science Academy (LASA) High School, Kealing Magnet Middle School, and Lively Magnet Middle School.

The magnets strengthen and support AISD by retaining and attracting students to AISD.

- Enrollment in AISD has been declining. AISD receives money for every student enrolled, so fewer students means less money for AISD. While overall enrollment has decreased, interest in AISD’s magnet schools remains strong and applications exceed the spots available.
- Students come to the magnets from all over the district. LASA has students from every AISD middle school.
- Magnet students also come from outside the district, private schools, and charters. On average, 15% of all accepted students live within the district, but did not attend an AISD magnet school, instead coming from private schools, charters, home schooling, or their families relocated to Austin from out of state or elsewhere in Texas. That means LASA is bringing the district the state’s contribution to the district for all of these new kids.
- The magnets’ high rankings and awards bring positive publicity to the district. Every year, the magnets get applicants from out of state and even out of the country from families who are relocating to Austin.

The magnets allow AISD to offer students specialized classes that cannot be offered at neighborhood schools in a cost-efficient way.

- AISD cannot offer the magnets’ advanced academics classes on every campus. Not enough students enroll and it is not cost-efficient. Centralizing the students makes it possible.
- Here are some examples. LASA offers Linear Algebra, Multivariable Calculus, Logic, Advanced Engineering, Pathophysiology, Modern Physics, Organic Chemistry, Differential Equations, and Number Theory. Kealing Magnet consistently offers Geometry and Algebra II—typically taught in the 10th and 11th grade years at most high schools. Lively MS offers Mock Trial and Advanced Placement Spanish at the middle school level.
- Without the magnets, AISD could not meet the academic needs of these students.

The magnets are run incredibly leanly and have some of the lowest per pupil spending of any schools in the district, if not the lowest.

- The magnets do their job cost-efficiently and are on the low end of the per pupil spending for the district.
- For example, the LASA budget in 2018 is just \$120 per student beyond the costs of staffing (the salaries and benefits). Looking at the *total* spending per pupil at LASA, LASA spent only **\$5,812** per year—the lowest per pupil spending of any AISD high school. AISD per-pupil spending at the other high schools in the district ranges from \$6,780 to \$13,646.

Magnet diversity is on the increase.

- The LASA community has worked to increase the school’s diversity. Here are a few examples of its efforts:
- Changes to the application and the acceptance process a couple of years ago
- Recruiting at all AISD middle schools
- Application mentoring at all Title I middle schools to help kids work on their LASA application and complete all the pieces
- Latino and African-American Outreach Committee to help with recruiting and support for accepted students
- Seventh grade visitor day for African-American and Latino AISD students