

Wiley Parent FAQ Sheet

VERSION: 09JUN08

Will Wiley still offer band for the 2008-09 school year?

Yes.

Has Wiley always had a band?

No. When Wiley first became an International Magnet school, band was not part of the program.

Will the Wake County Magnet office continue to fund Wiley's band program after the 2008-09 school year?

No. Currently the Magnet office is looking at the alignment of positions/resources with all magnet schools' themes. The Magnet office has determined that a band position is not an appropriate use of funds for an International Magnet school.

Are other schools in Wake County being scrutinized for their use of magnet funds?

Yes. All schools are being audited and are required to align magnet resources with the needs of their programs.

Did you ask to continue the band program with magnet funds?

Yes. Ms. Kershner has asked multiple times in multiple ways. She has exhausted this avenue.

Is it possible for the school to fund the band program?

To keep the Wiley band in place, we need to have a band teacher for a minimum of 20% employment. Once other non-magnet staffing needs are met, should there be extra funds, they can be channeled toward a band position.

Is there some way to offer band as an after-school program?

Possibly. We're looking into that possibility.

Do any other elementary schools in Wake County offer band?

Yes. It is only offered at the eight Gifted and Talented or AG Basics elementary schools.

Are language, music, art and dance programs being considered for elimination?

No. There are months of employment designated for arts and second language teachers as a standard part of the magnet allotment. On top of that, there is allotment designated for a technology specialist to enrich the International theme.

How did the Magnet Office come up with what electives fall under which Magnet?

There is a menu of electives from which all elementary schools with electives may choose. We are the only other elementary school with electives that is not GT or AG Basics. Therefore, we select electives from the same menu that the GT and AG-Basics schools use. Positions that use magnet funds should teach electives that are aligned with the theme.

Are cuts in funds going to affect any other parts of Wiley?

This year we had a 50% reading support teacher and a 20% math support teacher, funded through Wake County Intervention services. These positions may not be funded next year at the same level.

Are other Wake County schools going to be affected by funding cuts?

Yes. Funding has not kept up with growth.

If the original objective of magnet schools was "to promote diverse student populations and optimize use of facilities using unique programs to attract families," and band is a program that, based on parents' reasons for choosing a magnet, has met that objective, why would funding for a successful program be cut?

"Programs" should be read "theme." International Studies is our stated program, just as Creative Arts and Sciences, Active Learning and Technology, GT, etc. are programs.

On one hand, Wiley appears to be aligned with the GT Magnet schools for reducing the number of elective periods. On the other hand, Wiley is being separated from the GT Magnet schools with respect to band. Isn't this inconsistent?

No. These are two separate issues. The Magnet Office, under the direction of the Curriculum Management Audit, is requiring an alignment of resources to programs, which is driving the band issue. The reduction in the number of electives is something grades 3-5 classroom teachers would like to do in concert with the GT magnets. It is not a mandate of the Magnet Office.

Will the Wake County Magnet office provide funding for a part-time technology instructor?

Yes. The Magnet office has determined that adding technology to the Wiley curriculum will support its International Magnet charter.

Can't the resources of the parents of Wiley be used to provide the same technology support as a part-time technology instructor?

We welcome parental support of technology at Wiley. However, we need one person on staff who is certified to teach elementary students, has a deep understanding of the Standard Course of Study for technology, understands the unique needs of an International Studies program, **and** can coordinate the efforts of various parent volunteers.

Shouldn't we expect the teachers to have a basic knowledge of technology to provide technology support in the classrooms? Shouldn't their Continuing Professional Education require a certain number of technology hours?

Yes and they do, but every individual teacher has varying degrees of comfort with different types of software and hardware, and most would like to keep up with our students! Regarding renewal credits for licensure, those requirements are set by the Department of Public Instruction. They have removed the requirement to take technology coursework for renewal credit (go to: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/licensure/update/> for more information). However, most Wiley teachers do request professional development in technology.

Can the school choose between band and technology?

No. It's not a choice. Magnet funding will not be provided for band, whether we accept funding for technology or not.

Why might Wiley drop one elective period for 3-5 graders?

Wiley homeroom teachers report that they do not have enough time to meet the needs of all students in all core subject areas as the schedule now stands.

Why did the GT elementary magnets in Wake County change their schedule to two elective periods rather than three?

That change came about from the schools themselves identifying a need for more time for core instruction.

Would Wiley drop one elective period because of the No Child Left Behind initiative?

No. Regardless of EOG scores, teachers have indicated that too many students are not meeting their full academic potential in the time allotted. EOG scores are just one of the tools we use to assess whether the students are meeting their full potential.

If Wiley chooses to drop an elective period, when would this happen?

This would happen no sooner than the third quarter of the 2008-09 school year.

Is dropping an elective a done deal?

Anything we implement will be on a trial basis. We will be looking for ways to capture more time for core instruction; how that happens is not set in stone.

If Wiley drops one elective period for 3-5 grades, will a level of foreign language instruction be dropped?

No. Beginning, intermediate and advanced students will all find a spot in all five of the foreign language offerings.

If Wiley drops one elective period for 3-5 grades, will different levels of foreign language students find themselves in the same class?

Yes, that is a possibility. Depending on how we restructure, there may be more variation within the foreign language classes and we will help the teachers navigate this change. One consideration is to partner with college students training to become language teachers to assist the teacher with the differentiated lessons. This would be at no monetary cost to Wiley.

If core instruction time is increased for 3-5 graders, will the most academically gifted students have too much time in that class?

No. We will help teachers use that extra time wisely -- co-teaching and differentiated instruction will come into play. In addition, instead of the 18 students that would have been in an AG elective, our goal is to utilize the AG teacher to work with teachers across the grade levels, helping provide AG enrichment to the identified and in-house identified AG students.

Why don't you just offer an elective to help students who are not mastering grade-level content?

We do this already and anticipate continuing to use this strategy. The move to more core instruction is aimed at helping all students meet their full academic potential. Enrichment within the core content is just as necessary as remediation and this will target each child's needs.

If core instruction time is increased for 3-5 graders, will the students who need extra support fall further behind by missing a chance for differentiated learning during an elective period?

No. We will help teachers use the extra homeroom time to benefit all levels of students -- co-teaching and differentiated instruction will come into play. Students will also continue to have opportunities for extra support in electives.

Will the language teachers and the AG teacher spend fewer hours at Wiley?

No. They will spend the same amount of time at school and approximately the same amount of time interacting with students. However, some of this will be in co-teaching situations or in differentiated learning opportunities rather than during elective classes. AG students who have not been able to take many AG electives may actually have more time with the AG teacher.

What opportunities will parents have to provide input on the initiative to gain more core instructional time?

The school leadership team will be charged with identifying priorities and designing schedule scenarios to be discussed by the faculty, with final determination to be made by school administration. We welcome ideas from parents, which can be submitted through email to Ms. Kershner at ekershner@wcpss.net.

How can we get more information or have further questions answered?

We have created an email account for questions pertaining to these issues to be submitted. These questions will be added to this document on a weekly basis. You may submit your questions regarding the schedule and curriculum changes to: AskWileyElementary@gmail.com. Also, please feel free to set up an individual meeting with Ms. Kershner over the summer and into the fall.

June 9, 2008 Questions

Who does the school "leadership team" consist of and how can someone become part of this team?

The school leadership team is comprised of a staff member from each of the grade levels and specialist-area teams. Parents are not a part of this team.

Who wrote the program description for Wiley Elementary found in the wcpss.net website & quoted by Ms. Kershner during the PTA meeting on 5/29?

The program description was originally written by a team from WCPSS Curriculum and Instruction department, under the supervision of Superintendent Walter Marks, when Wiley was first magnetized in 1982. Since then, it has been modified periodically by the Magnet Office.

Can we re-write this description so that it is more reflective of the program at Wiley?

Parents and school staff do not initiate revisions to the magnet description. Changes are initiated by the Magnet Office, which consults with school administration in the process.

Are we making changes to our program based on this (potentially outdated) wcpss site description?

The updated description for 2008-2009 will appear in the Magnet Programs brochure coming out in the fall. The changes being made are based on that description, which does emphasize technology as well as culture and language.

When did Wiley begin to offer band?

Band was here when Ms. Rawlins came to Wiley. The Magnet Office doesn't know the exact year band was added.

In the Magnet status era, has Wiley always had 3 elective slots for 3-5th graders? If not, when was this change implemented?

When the magnet schools were created in 1982, the GT and International Studies schools followed the same basic outline of 3 electives per quarter for grades 3-5.

At the PTA meeting and on the FAQ sheet it seems to imply that all Wake County magnets with electives have made the decision to move to 2 elective slots for 3-5th graders. Doesn't Washington Elementary have 3 slots? If so are they changing?

Because WCPSS offers families from any one node only one GT option as a magnet, the Magnet Office needs to ensure that there is consistency among the offerings at those schools, particularly in terms of the number of electives. Washington Elementary's principal was on leave during these discussions. Keep in mind that Wiley was not mandated to reduce the number of electives by the Magnet Office. When presented with the information that the other electives-based magnets were changing, Wiley *teachers* in grade 3-5 requested that we, too, look at that possibility.

The FAQ mentioned that we pick or are to pick our electives from the GT listing. Does this inhibit our stated goal of strengthening our International focus or are we planning to create/find/offer more "International" electives than we currently have or is this one of the reasons why we need more homeroom time?

When the electives were written for GT schools and the International Magnet, teachers were hired to write the electives based on the themes. There are specific electives aimed at the International theme, which Wiley teachers have been updating as they have taught them. There is also a need to further "internationalize" some of the electives we do teach. The Magnet Office provides funding for teachers to spend time over the summer rewriting/updating electives to better connect with both the theme and the Standard Course of Study. A lack of such electives is not the reason we need more homeroom time.

If we decrease the number of elective slots, this might mean a reduction in the availability for all kids to get to the more popular electives (e.g. they fill up and there's less time/opportunities to get in). Are their plans to offer the more popular electives more often (or two times in the same quarter or?)

This is one of the many contingencies we will be thinking about as we look at scheduling options.

Since we are potentially following the models of GT's that have 2 elective slots for 3-5th graders, e.g. Hunter, will we begin offering pullouts for AG or something similar?

AG services will also be discussed. Pushing in, co-teaching and flexible grouping are all options.