



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 421**

*January Session, 2005*

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1311

*Senate, April 19, 2005*

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. GAFFEY of the 13th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOL ENROLLMENT.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-264*l* of the general statutes is amended by  
2 adding subsection (j) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2005*):

3 (NEW) (j) An interdistrict magnet school operator that has unused  
4 student capacity, after accommodating students from participating  
5 towns in accordance with approved enrollment agreements, may  
6 enroll directly any applicant student. The Commissioner of Education  
7 shall pay to the magnet school operator the tuitions due from resident  
8 school districts in support of children enrolled directly by the magnet  
9 school operator. The per pupil tuition shall be the same as that charged  
10 all other participating districts and shall be paid from grant payments  
11 otherwise due and payable under the provisions of section 10-262*i* to  
12 the town served by the resident school district.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	10-2641

**ED**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 06 \$	FY 07 \$
Education, Dept.	GF - Cost	Potential	Potential

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:**

Municipalities	Effect	FY 06 \$	FY 07 \$
All Municipalities	Cost	Potential	Potential
Various Municipalities	Revenue Gain	Potential	Potential

**Explanation**

This bill results in a potential cost to the State Department of Education as it would allow enrollment of students in magnet schools beyond those students from participating (member) towns if excess capacity existed. This cost would be in the magnet school operating grant, which is paid to magnet school operators based on enrollment percentages. In FY 05 the state is expending approximately \$70.0 million on magnet school operating grants. The governor’s recommendations for FY 06 and FY 07 are \$84.5 million and \$99.9 million respectively. It is anticipated that this bill could increase those amounts by one to two percent.

The bill also results in a potential cost to towns, as it would require the town to pay the tuition cost of any magnet school chosen by students from the town. This payment would be made from the the town’s ECS allocation. Current magnet school tuition rates are generally \$2,000 to \$5,000 per student sometime higher. These costs are a revenue gain to towns or regional education service centers operating magnet schools. The cost to some districts could be significant in relation to their local budget.

**OLR Bill Analysis**

sSB 1311

**AN ACT CONCERNING INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOL ENROLLMENT****SUMMARY:**

This bill allows a student to enroll directly in any interdistrict magnet school that has space available, even if the student does not live in one of the districts participating in the magnet school. Currently, only students whose home districts are participating in a magnet school may attend the school.

The bill requires the education commissioner to pay the magnet school the same tuition, if any, for the directly enrolled students that the magnet school charges to participating districts for their students. The commissioner must deduct the cost of any magnet school tuition for directly enrolled students from the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants payable to each such student's home district.

Under the bill, an interdistrict magnet school may enroll students directly if it still has spaces available after accommodating all interested students from its participating districts.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2005

**BACKGROUND*****Interdistrict Magnet Schools***

An interdistrict magnet school is a publicly funded school operated by a local or regional school district, a regional educational service center (RESC), or a cooperative arrangement involving two or more school districts. Each magnet school has a special educational theme or focus. Students attend voluntarily. The purpose of interdistrict magnet schools is to reduce, eliminate, or prevent racial, ethnic, or economic isolation of students while offering a high-quality curriculum that supports educational improvement.

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**Interdistrict Magnet School Funding – “Host” Vs. RESC-Operated Schools**

There are two kinds of interdistrict magnet schools: those operated by local and regional school districts and known as “host” magnets, and those operated by RESCs. For both types of schools, the state provides grants for capital and operating costs and a subsidy for transporting students to schools outside their home districts.

Both host and RESC-operated magnets have access to the same state magnet school grants, but RESC-operated magnets receive no ECS grants for any of the students who attend the school. For ECS purposes, those students are counted as attending school in their home districts. As a result, they typically charge tuition to districts that send students to them. RESC-operated schools in Bridgeport, Hartford, East Hartford, and Bloomfield are among the RESC-operated magnet programs that charge tuition to sending districts.

Host-district magnets can often meet their operating costs entirely from the ECS grants they receive for their own students attending the magnet school plus the state operating grants they receive for each magnet school student. As a result, they often do not charge tuition to participating districts sending students to the magnet. This tuition-free host magnet model was pioneered by New Haven and is also currently in effect at some magnet schools in Waterbury and Hartford.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 16      Nay 10