

**Sheff Movement**



**Quality Integrated Education for All Children**

March 17, 2014

To: Members of the Education Committee

From: Philip Tegeler, on behalf of the Sheff Movement coalition

Re: *Statement in support of S.R. No. 7 and H.R. No. 4 (Resolutions Approving the Settlement Agreement In Sheff v. O'Neill)*

The Sheff Movement coalition is a parent and community network that works to educate the public about the successful voluntary two-way interdistrict school integration programs arising from the Sheff v O'Neill decision and settlements, and to promote improvement and expansion of these programs.

The Sheff Movement coalition commends the state and the plaintiffs for reaching the "Phase 3" Settlement Agreement that is the subject of the pending House and Senate Resolutions. Although this is only a modest step forward, it represents continued progress toward the goal of quality integrated education in our region. We urge the Committee to approve these resolutions.

Connecticut's two-way voluntary regional school integration system is delivering quality, integrated education to over 20,000 students in the Hartford region, including over 40% of Hartford students. Data released in 2013 suggests that Hartford students attending the regional magnet schools and the suburban Open Choice program are significantly improving their academic performance. National data on school diversity programs confirms both the academic value of these programs, as well as the positive impact they have on children's racial attitudes and long term educational outcomes.

The successful two-way system we have developed in Connecticut is becoming a national model, but there is still much work left to do. Last year, for example, there were more than four times as many applicants for regional magnet schools and Open Choice as there were seats available. Our exemplary regional system should continue to grow, as mandated by the Connecticut Supreme Court, so that all children in the region have the opportunity to share in the benefits of an integrated education.