



NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Testimony in support of: **H.B. No. 7201 (RAISED) EDUCATION. 'AN ACT APPLYING THE SHEFF DEFINITION OF REDUCED-ISOLATION SETTING TO ALL INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOLS IN THE STATE'**, to apply the reduced-isolation setting standards of the 2013 stipulation and order for Milo Sheff, et al. v. William A. O'Neill, et al., as extended, to all interdistrict magnet schools in the state.

Submitted by: Dr. Manuel Rivera, Superintendent, New London Public Schools

I am here this morning to speak in support of HB 7201, and ask that you support this bill.

This is not a bill that seeks additional state funding, nor would it have a financial impact. It is a bill that would eliminate a double standard that currently exists, in determining eligibility for those magnet funds that have already been budgeted.

The opportunity to provide high demand, quality schools and programs necessary to significantly improve student achievement and at the same time, reduce racial isolation in the State of Connecticut, is made possible by the state's financial commitment of magnet funding.

In order to access this funding source, necessary to operate quality magnet schools, we must strictly adhere to the laws and requirements established and imposed for enrollment, including racial balance, as one criteria.

There are two standards in the state of Connecticut, Sheff and Non-Sheff, despite that fact that all magnet schools throughout the state share the same goals: increased student achievement and decreased racial isolation.

Sheff magnet schools meet the racial enrollment standard when 75% or less of their enrollment is comprised of African American and Hispanic students, while all other magnet schools in the state must meet a different standard, and that is that 25% of their total enrollment must be students who identify as only white.

Schools in communities with high concentrations of African American and Hispanic/Latino students, such as Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London, must not only meet enrollment expectations that require a minimum of 25% of regional or Out-Of-District students, they must also meet a racial balance criteria that is different than the magnet schools in Hartford region (aka the Sheff Region). Given the increasingly diverse demographics of communities throughout the state, and especially those adjacent to Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Haven, and New London, this different standard represents a higher bar to achieve and threatens our ability to access the magnet funds that are so essential to meeting the demand of families in our region, a racially and ethnically diverse region.

The different measures for districts in and out of the Sheff region is not equitable and we are asking that there be one standard.

Thank You.