Bill No.: HB-7109
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOL PROGRAM FUNDING.
Vote Date: 3/6/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations
PH Date: 2/22/2019
File No.: 

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
Magnet school funding has remained flat and has not adjusted for inflation or increased cost of living for a decade; therefore magnet schools could use additional funding to assure equality in schools.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
Commissioner, Dianna R. Wentzell, State of Connecticut Department of Education(SDE):
Commissioner Wentzell opposes this bill. The magnet account line item, if this bill passes, would increase by fourteen million dollars and SDE cannot advocate for these increases in this budgetary climate.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.(CABE):
CABE supports this bill. Funding for the Sheff-region magnet schools has not changed since 2011 and was cut in 2017 and 2018. If magnet schools are not properly funded it would result in increased tuition rates.

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES):
ACES supports this bill. ACES claims that if magnet schools continue to be not properly funded then local schools district with an especially high number of magnet school students would disproportionally pay the price. School districts with high levels of poverty have a
greater likelihood of having a high number of students opt into magnet programs thus furthering the burden on already impoverished local school districts. Magnet schools reduce ethnic, racial, and economic isolation, but also demonstrate high levels of achievement.

**Executive Director, Subira Gordon, ConnCAN:**
Executive Director Gordon supports this bill. Executive Director Gordon claims that the state should create a way in which magnet programs can participate in the ECS formula or apply the same benefits public schools with impoverished populations are given.

**Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM):**
CCM supports this bill. CCM claims that education budgets are the highest cost for municipalities, as high as eighty percent. CCM urges that the Committee put forth comprehensive funding solutions for public schools.

**Senior Director, Gary Minor, College Relations, Goodwin College:**
Director Minor supports this bill. Director Minor claims that magnet programs have only two methods of funding, operating grants and charging tuition on the sending districts. Magnet schools have no authority to levy taxes for revenues. Director Minor requests a stable funding source for magnet school programs in the long term.

**Fran Rabinowitz, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS):**
CAPSS supports this bill. CAPSS claims that magnet schools are a good investment in students and effectively promote integration. CAPSS requests that this bill include all magnet schools in Connecticut and not just Magnet schools in Hartford.

**Orlando Rodriguez, Connecticut Education Association (CEA):**
CEA supports this bill. CEA brings to the attention of the committee that the Governor’s budget of February twentieth, two thousand nineteen reduces funding for magnet schools.

**Executive Director, Founder, Katie Roy, Connecticut School Finance Project:**
Director Roy supports this bill. Director Roy advocates for a unified funding formula that would distribute state education aid to all types of Connecticut schools to promote equality in schools. Different types of schools continue to be funded by different formulas which can become unfair and contentious.

**Supervisor of Literacy, Sarah Lahr Fitzsimmons, CREC:**
Supervisor Fitzsimmons supports this bill. Due to underfunding magnet schools have had to cut all of their curriculum specialists and have had to make cuts to instructional supplies. Funding magnet schools would add value to the state and the families therein.

**Executive Director, Eileen S. Howley, Ed.D, LEARN:**
Director Howley supports this bill. Despite fiscal conservatism within school budgeting magnet schools cannot keep up with the cost of living increases, wage increases, and medical expenses. In order to continue to provide high quality services that produce high graduation rates, magnet schools need more funding.

**Director of School Choice and Enrollment, Marquelle Middleton, New Haven Public Schools:**
Director Middleton supports this bill. New Haven magnet schools provide unique experiences for students such as cross cultural communications and engineering. The recent cuts to magnet school funding led to a million dollar budgetary shortfall. An increase in funding would equate to a lifeline for magnet schools. Despite reaching racial equity targets magnet schools continue to have their budgets cut.

**Superintendent, Tim Sullivan, CREC Magnet Schools:**
Superintendent Sullivan supports this bill. Over the past two years CREC has seen an increase in enrollment whilst at the same time cutting ten percent of their workforce, increasing tuition, cutting supplies, and consolidating schools. The cost of education per pupil in magnet schools is lower than the state and regional average, but CREC is still running a six million dollar deficit. Due to this deficit, tuitions will have to increase by eight percent. CREC requests that after a decade of flat line funding and funding cuts this bill passes in order to give CREC budgetary relief.

**CREC Parent Senate Representatives:**
The CREC Parent Senate Representatives support this bill. The CREC Parent Senate Representatives advises Superintendent Tim Sullivan. They believe that magnet schools are an excellent conduit of cultural emersion and integration. Additionally, magnet schools offer unique skill sets and enriching environments. The CREC Parent Senate Representatives compares the necessity of providing food to their children with providing education to their children.

These stakeholders support this bill. These stakeholders represent magnet school students, teachers, and parents. In their testimonies they outlined their positive experiences at and with magnet schools. In addition to promoting racial integration, these stakeholder claim that graduation rates and school quality is high enough that magnet schools give value to their communities, families, and the state as a whole. Magnet schools, due to a decade of flat line funding and more recent funding cuts, are under tremendous financial pressure. With these facts in mind, the stakeholders request that magnet schools be further funded in order that they can continue to provide quality education.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (CALAS):**
CALAS opposes this bill. Magnet schools disproportionately underserve English Learners and this bill only includes Hartford area schools. CALAS recommends that instead of this bill, the Committee address the underlying inequities in the ECS formula.
James McGovern:
Mr. McGovern opposes this bill. Mr. McGovern claims that magnet school management has misguidedy approached magnet schools as a zero-sum game. Mr. McGovern believes that the technique of ‘Lean Thinking’, commonly used in the private sector, could lead to more efficient and cheaper magnet schools whilst at the same providing equal educational outcomes. Mr. McGovern believes that the students could find five percent in cost savings if the brightest among them were given the opportunity to do so.

Reported by: Colin Carroll
Date: [Type Date]