

**Choice and
Consequences:
Public Schools of
Choice in Connecticut**

MANY CHOICES = MANY TENSIONS

Public schools of choice

Broad spectrum of school choice programs serve different educational goals

Different types of choice programs exist in addition to neighborhood public schools

Multitude of choices create certain tensions



WHY SO MANY CHOICES?

Over 100 years of school choice

Each type of school has its own legislative history:



1917: Statewide
Technical High
School System

1933: Statewide
Vocational
Agriculture
Program

1993: Interdistrict
Magnet Schools

1996: Charter Schools

WHY SO MANY CHOICES?

Over 100 years of school choice

Once each program is established, it:

- becomes a part of the Connecticut education landscape
- develops constituencies of students, parents, teachers, and administrators who come to depend on, and often advocate for, the program



SCHOOL CHOICE TENSIONS

The direct consequences of choice

1

Competition for students

Students leaving for choice programs means fewer enrolled at the local (sending) district

Shrinking statewide student body means heightened competition for students

2

Competition for funds

Some choice programs cause the local district to receive a reduced Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant

Choice programs also compete for funds in the state budget process



SCHOOL CHOICE TENSIONS

The direct consequences of choice

3

Tuition costs

Participation in some choice programs mean the local (sending) district must pay tuition to the receiving choice program

4

Demand outpaces supply

Demand for placement is greater than available slots

Long waits on waiting lists lead to frustration/disillusionment with programs





TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS

TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS

Formally the "Technical Education and Career System"

DESCRIPTION

Curriculum: traditional high school curriculum with technical and career instruction

Funding: 100% state-funded

Organization: state-run system in the process of becoming an independent agency by the 2020-21 school year

TENSIONS

Competition for students (application process)

Competition for funds (agency status)





**AGRISCIENCE
AND
TECHNOLOGY
CENTERS**

AGRISCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTERS

Formally "regional agricultural science and technology education centers"

DESCRIPTION

- Curriculum:** Vo-ag curriculum in addition to traditional high school curriculum
- Funding:** Sending district pays tuition, state provides a per-student grant, and sponsoring (host) district provides remaining support
- Organization:** Most centers embedded in existing local high schools
- Sponsoring local district's board of education operates



TENSIONS

- Competition for funds (per student grant recently increased; sending district pays student tuition)



CHARTER SCHOOLS

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Offering greater operational freedom

DESCRIPTION

Curriculum: traditional curriculum; many have college preparation theme

Funding: state per student grant; private sources, including foundations

Organization: school governing council made up of private citizens; state charters are independent of local districts, while local charters are part of local districts

TENSIONS

Competition for state funds (per student grant increase)

Competition for students (discipline)





MAGNET SCHOOLS

MAGNET SCHOOLS

Assisting in desegregation

DESCRIPTION

Curriculum: themed curriculum designed to draw students from multiple school districts to promote racial, ethnic, and economic diversity

Funding: per-pupil state grants, with tuition from sending districts for most magnets as permitted by law

Organization: operated by school districts ("host magnets") or regional education service centers or other nonprofit entities ("RESC magnets")

TENSIONS

Competition for students (self-selection; shrinking suburban enrollment)

Competition for funds (Sheff effect; tuition costs)

Demand outpaces supply (enrollment lottery/waiting lists)





CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING

CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING

The state's contribution

HISTORICAL FUNDING LEVELS FOR VARIOUS CHOICE PROGRAMS (in millions)

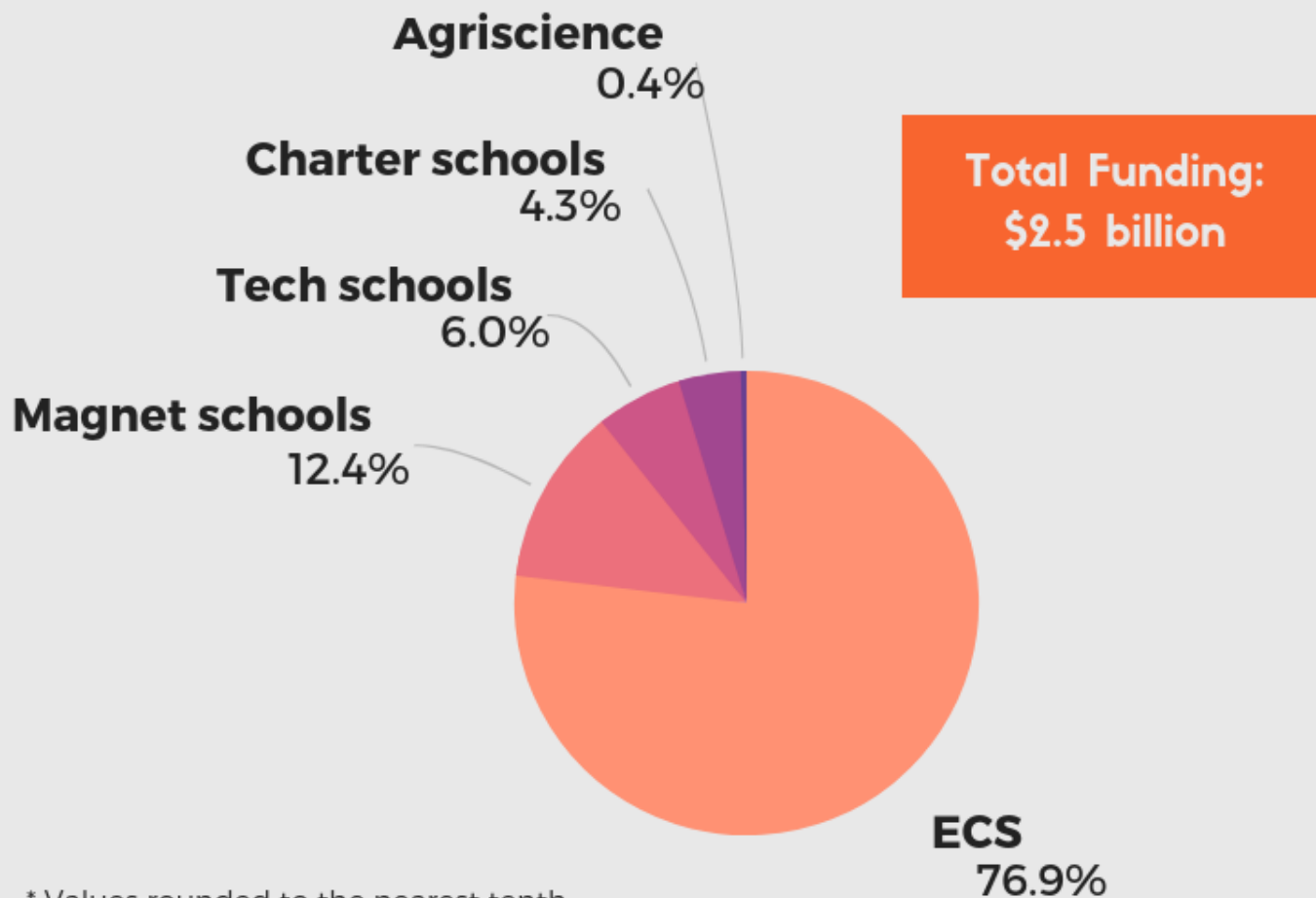
Fiscal Year (FY)	Charter Schools	Vo-Ag Centers	Magnet Schools	Technical High Schools
19 *	\$ 117.0	\$ 13.8	\$ 326.5	\$ 152.9
18	\$ 108.5	\$ 10.0	\$ 310.2	\$ 151.0
17	\$ 103.5	\$ 10.2	\$ 313.5	\$ 153.8
16	\$ 99.3	\$ 11.0	\$ 318.7	\$ 162.5
15	\$ 87.7	\$ 11.0	\$ 310.7	\$ 155.0
Five-Year Growth Rate	25.0 %	19.9%	4.9%	- 1.4%

* Reflects appropriated funds, not actual expenditures.

CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING

The state's contribution

**FY 18 STATE FUNDING COMPARISON:
SELECTED CHOICE PROGRAMS
VERSUS ECS***



* Values rounded to the nearest tenth.

QUESTIONS?

Thank You

We hope you found
our presentation
informative.

Supplemental resources on these topics are
available from our Legislative Library:

[https://wp.cga.ct.gov/lib/2018-issues-
conference-education-choice-schools](https://wp.cga.ct.gov/lib/2018-issues-conference-education-choice-schools)



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Issues Conference
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