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Staff Report

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# Hartford Region Public School Choice Programs

April 13, 2016

Legislative Program Review  
and Investigations Committee

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Connecticut General Assembly

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## Hartford Region Public School Choice Programs

### Background

In September 2015, the Program Review and Investigations Committee authorized a study to describe the rules, governance structures, enrollment, and funding for public school choice programs in the Hartford region.

Choice schools in the Hartford region are distinct from those in other areas of the state because of the ongoing response to the 1996 *Sheff v. O'Neill* ruling (238 Conn. 1, 687 A2d. 1267). The court directed “the legislature and the executive branch to put the search for appropriate remedial measures at the top of their respective agendas” rather than ordering specific remedial action to address the racial, ethnic, and economic isolation.

The legislature’s initial response to the *Sheff* ruling was the 1997 Enhancing Education Choices and Opportunities Act (P.A. 97-290), which included new language supporting efforts to reduce isolation in the state’s enumerated educational interests (C.G.S. Sec. 10-4a) and listed a number of methods by which the state could reduce “racial, ethnic and economic isolation” in public schools.

Since the 1996 *Sheff* ruling, there have been five agreements between the state and the plaintiffs, including three main agreements (Phases I, II, and III) and extensions of Phases II and III. The most recent agreement, adopted by the legislature in February 2015, included a goal that at least 47.5 percent of minority Hartford-resident students attend reduced-isolation schools. But only 45.5 percent were enrolled in reduced-isolation schools in October 2015.

A Phase IV stipulation was supposed to be in place by August 2015. While the state has been in contact with the plaintiffs, no such agreement has been publically announced to date.

### Public Choice School Programs

Public school choice programs are programs enrolling students in schools outside of their geographically-based neighborhood schools by choice of the student.

**Interdistrict magnet schools** (34,500 students in October 2013) are designed to support racial, ethnic, and economic diversity, by enrolling students from multiple towns. Magnets can be operated by a board of education (BOE), a regional educational service center (RESC), or other non-profit. Per pupil magnet grants are available from \$3,000 to \$13,054 (FY 16). Magnet operators may receive ECS funding and/or tuition.

**Technical high schools** (10,700 students) focus on providing trade and vocational education to align workforce qualifications with industry needs. They are state run and funded.

**Charter schools** (7,100 students) are operated under the terms of a state or local charter agreement for the express purpose of educating certain underserved segments of the student population. State law differentiates between charters granted by the state (23 schools) or by a local BOE (1 school). State charter schools receive a grant of \$11,000 per pupil.

**Agri-science centers** (3,100 students) provide education focusing on agriculture and/or aquaculture and provide opportunities for students to receive occupational instruction and experience. They are administered by local BOEs, which can receive grant funding of \$3,200 per pupil and charge tuition to sending districts.

The **Open Choice** enrollment program (2,700 students) allows students, especially those in urban districts, to attend neighborhood schools in districts outside of their own town. ECS funding is split between sending and receiving districts. State grants from \$3,000 to \$8,000 per pupil are available to the receiving district.

### Choice Programs in the *Sheff* Region

**17 percent of *Sheff*-region students are enrolled in some school choice program, compared to 11 percent of students statewide.** Magnet schools and open choice enrollment are two main methods used by the state to comply with the *Sheff* agreements.

**Half of the magnet schools in the state serve the Hartford region.** All but six of the 44 *Sheff* magnets are operated by Hartford Public Schools (20) or the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)(18).

**Demand for seats in *Sheff* magnets well exceeds availability.** Placement is offered by lottery for all *Sheff* magnets (and Open Choice enrollment), regardless of individual school operator. Placement can be based on several preference groupings, as well as by town of residence.

# Acronyms

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|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>BOE</b>   | Board of Education                                       |
| <b>CCJEF</b> | Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Financing |
| <b>CREC</b>  | Capitol Region Education Council                         |
| <b>CSDE</b>  | Connecticut State Department of Education                |
| <b>CTHSS</b> | Connecticut Technical High School System                 |
| <b>ECS</b>   | Education Cost Sharing                                   |
| <b>EMP</b>   | Enrollment Management Plan                               |
| <b>GTB</b>   | Guaranteed Tax Base                                      |
| <b>IEP</b>   | Individualized Education Program                         |
| <b>RESC</b>  | Regional Educational Service Center                      |
| <b>RSCO</b>  | Regional School Choice Office                            |
| <b>SBE</b>   | State Board of Education                                 |

# Introduction

## Public School Choice Programs

Public school choice programs are those programs enrolling students, by their choice, in schools outside of their geographically-based neighborhood schools or districts. In Connecticut, there are four types of choice schools, along with another choice enrollment option:

- Interdistrict magnet schools - Magnet schools are designed to support racial, ethnic, and economic diversity, by enrolling students from multiple towns.
- Technical high schools - Part of the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) run by the state, technical high schools focus on providing trade and vocational education to align workforce qualifications with industry needs.
- Charter schools - charter schools operate under the terms of a charter agreement, granted by the state or locally, for the expressed purpose of educating certain underserved segments of the student population.
- Regional agricultural science and technology centers – Known as agri-science centers, these schools provide education focusing on agriculture and/or aquaculture and operate year round in order for students to receive occupational instruction and experience.

Besides schools populated entirely through a choice option, a program called Open Choice allows students to enroll in local schools besides schools in their geographic district. Seats are made available by receiving districts for out-of-district students to be educated alongside the district’s resident students. Like magnets, the Open Choice program is aimed at reducing racial, ethnic, and economic isolation.

Taken all together, over 58,000 of the state’s 550,000 students enrolled in public schools in October of 2013 were enrolled in some kind of public school choice program (10.6 percent). Of the five types of school choice, vocational technology and agri-science centers are available only to students for the high school grades. Excepting out-of-district students placed into local schools through the Open Choice program, students enrolled in choice programs attended school at one of 151 locations statewide.

Magnet schools make up over half of the choice schools in the state, as shown in Table 1. A listing of the individual choice schools is provided in Appendix A.

**Table 1. Number of Choice Schools in Connecticut (2015)**

| Type of Choice School        | Number of Schools |              |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
|                              | State             | Sheff region |
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools | 88                | 44           |
| Technical High Schools       | 20                | 3            |
| Charter Schools              | 24                | 3            |
| Agri-science Centers         | 19                | 3            |
| Total                        | 151               | 53           |

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

*Sheff v. O’Neill*. A major consideration for the growth of certain choice school programs (e.g., interdistrict magnet schools), especially in the Hartford region, was the 1996 *Sheff v.*

*O’Neill* decision.<sup>1</sup> In *Sheff*, the Connecticut Supreme Court held that the state had not met its obligations to Hartford public school students in providing free public education that was absent of racial, ethnic and economic segregation, as mandated by the state constitution. The court found that the state was the entity responsible for setting up the state’s system of school districts contiguous with municipal boundaries, which resulted in the segregation of Hartford students. The court did not order specific remedial action; instead it directed “the legislature and the executive branch to put the search for appropriate remedial measures at the top of their respective agendas.” Choice school programs have been a central party of the state’s efforts to address the disparities found in the *Sheff* case.

***Sheff* region.** Because of the 1996 *Sheff v. O’Neill* decision, choice programs in the Hartford area differ in some aspects from choice programs in other areas of the state. For this study, the Hartford region is synonymous with the subset of 22 towns named within certain *Sheff* legal documents as *Sheff* towns. The 22 *Sheff* towns are: Avon, Bloomfield, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Manchester, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, South Windsor, Suffield, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks.

Choice programs in *Sheff* towns, and serving *Sheff* town residents, are the focus of this study. However, there is considerable overlap between programs serving the *Sheff* towns and those serving the wider region beyond the named *Sheff* towns. References to the broader region will be noted where they occur throughout the report.

## **Program Review Study**

In September 2015, the program review committee voted to approve a study of Hartford region public school choice programs. The study focus was to describe the statutory requirements of these programs while providing a comparison of the uses of these enabling statutes. Choice programs were to be compared to one another and, when possible, programs in the Hartford region were to be compared to programs in other parts of the state. Study activities include statute and other document review, analysis of student enrollment data, and stakeholder interviews.

**Scope of study.** Because of the focus on Hartford region public school choice programs, more detail is provided on programs operating in the region than others throughout the state. A recent program review report completed in December 2015, *Regional Cooperation Between Local Boards of Education*, provides substantial information on the agri-science centers statewide.

**Organization.** This report is organized into six chapters about legal environment, statutory requirements, funding, enrollment, admissions, and *Sheff* magnet schools.

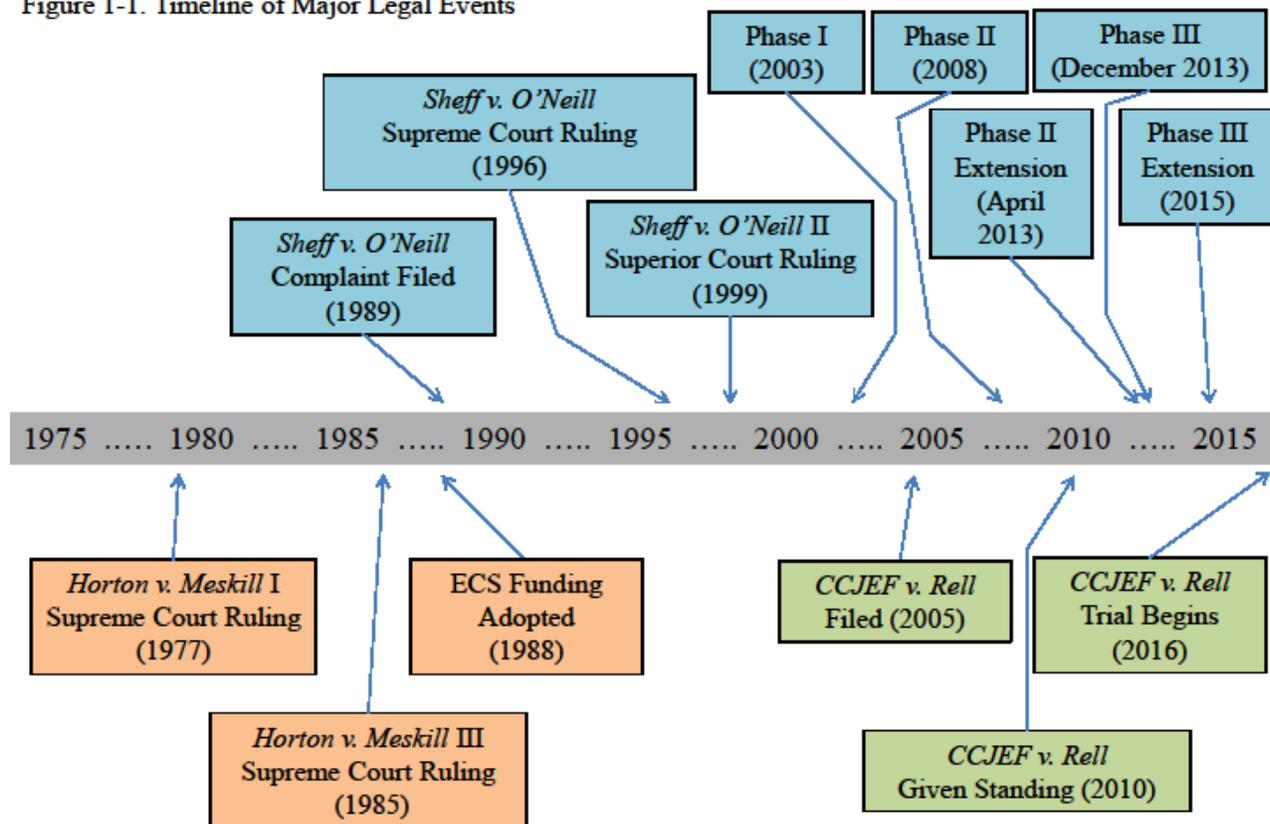
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<sup>1</sup> 238 Conn. 1, 687 A2d. 1267.

## Legal Environment of Choice Schools

Choice schools in the Hartford region have been opened and operated, in large part, due to the requirements of and reaction to the 1996 *Sheff v. O’Neill* ruling. While choice programs have been authorized throughout the state, choice programs in the Hartford area have been subject to several agreements between the state and the *Sheff* plaintiffs. This chapter provides a brief history of the *Sheff* ruling and subsequent agreements and compliance with the same, along with a look at a few other major legal issues regarding the state’s education system. A timeline of major legal events is provided in Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1. Timeline of Major Legal Events



Source: PRI

***Sheff v. O’Neill***. The *Sheff v. O’Neill* case began as a complaint filed in 1989 by a group of students enrolled in and near the Hartford school district. The suit alleged that the drawing of school district lines along municipal boundaries led to a situation where students in Hartford were racially and economically segregated from, and as compared to, students in nearby suburbs. Likewise, the suit alleged that suburban students were deprived of the opportunity to learn with and from their minority peers. The suit was brought on the grounds that this segregation infringed on all students’ constitutional right to equal education opportunities.

Six years later, in 1995, the trial court decided that the state was not responsible for the condition, which the plaintiffs appealed. The appeal went directly to the Connecticut Supreme Court, which held that the state had not met its obligations in providing free public education that is absent of racial, ethnic and economic segregation, as mandated by the state constitution. The court declared that the state was the entity responsible for setting up the state's system of school districts resulting in the segregation of students in the Hartford school district.

At the time, the court did not order specific remedial action. Instead, the court directed "the legislature and the executive branch to put the search for appropriate remedial measures at the top of their respective agendas."<sup>2</sup>

*Initial legislative response.* In response to the July 1996 decision, the legislature crafted Public Act 97-290, *An Act Enhancing Educational Choices and Opportunities*, in the 1997 session. The public act amended the state's statutory identification of educational interests to include: "(3) in order to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, each school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and may provide such opportunities with students from other communities."<sup>3</sup>

The act laid out nine ways by which school districts could pursue this reduced isolation goal, the following eight of which remain in statute today:<sup>4</sup>

- (1) interdistrict magnet school programs;
- (2) charter schools;
- (3) interdistrict after-school, Saturday and summer programs, and sister-school projects;
- (4) intradistrict and interdistrict public school choice programs;
- (5) interdistrict school building projects;
- (6) interdistrict program collaboratives for students and staff;
- (7) distance learning through the use of technology; and
- (8) any other experience that increases awareness of the diversity of individuals and cultures.

This act expanded and modified methods that had been established prior to this act (e.g., interdistrict magnet schools and the Open Choice program).<sup>5</sup> In some cases, this act marked a shift from the state allowing such programs to incentivizing and otherwise affirmatively encouraging their adoption. Likewise, the act required the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop "a five-year implementation plan with appropriate goals and strategies to achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity, increase student achievement, reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, improve effective instruction and encourage greater parental and community involvement in all public schools of the state." While this was a one-time

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<sup>2</sup> 236 Conn. 1, 45-46 (1996).

<sup>3</sup> Codified in statute in C.G.S. Sec. 10-4a(3).

<sup>4</sup> The ninth method by which school districts could pursue reduced isolation was through "minority staff recruitment," but this method was removed from statute in 1998 by P.A. 98-252.

<sup>5</sup> C.G.S. Secs. 10-226c and 266j.

requirement, related state law requires school districts and CSDE to report on efforts and methods to reduce isolation.<sup>6</sup>

*1998 continuation.* In March 1998, the plaintiffs sought court intervention in the case regarding the pace and efficacy of the state’s efforts to reduce isolation in and around Hartford schools. In March 1999,<sup>7</sup> the court issued its decision, and while agreeing that there had been little reduction in racial isolation (in fact, there had been a slight movement towards increased isolation in Hartford Public Schools), found that the state was acting in accordance with the 1996 *Sheff* decision.

The court noted that due to the timing of the July 1996 *Sheff* decision, changes were not made legislatively until the 1997 session, and were then implemented for the 1997-1998 school year. Requirements introduced in P.A. 97-290 for school districts to report on their efforts towards reducing isolation had an initial completion date in the fall of 1998. The SBE five-year implementation plan was also set to be concluded in the fall of 1998, which meant the plan had not even been developed, much less acted upon, when the plaintiffs sought court intervention. For these reasons, the decision of the court was that the follow-up complaint was premature and more time was needed to see whether the state’s efforts were effective in reducing isolation.

*Sheff agreements.* Since the 1999 ruling, there have been three major agreements between the plaintiffs and the defendants, along with two extensions of the agreements. Information on when the agreements and extensions were adopted, and the years they covered is provided in Table 1-1.<sup>8</sup> In 2003, the court accepted a Stipulation and Order agreement between the parties, which is now commonly referred to as the *Sheff* Phase I agreement.

**Table 1-1. *Sheff* Agreements – Adoption and Coverage Dates**

|                     | <b>Adopted</b> | <b>Year(s) covered</b> |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Phase I             | January 2003   | 2003-2007              |
| Phase II            | April 2008     | 2008-2013              |
| Phase II extension  | April 2013     | 2013-2014              |
| Phase III           | December 2013  | 2013-2015              |
| Phase III extension | February 2015  | 2015-2016              |

Source: PRI analysis of *Sheff* documents

All of the *Sheff* agreements are much more concrete about what constitutes suitable progress than the 1996 court ruling. The single most important measure of progress noted in the agreements is the percentage of minority Hartford resident students who are enrolled in a “reduced-isolation setting.” A reduced-isolation setting is defined by the *Sheff* Phase I agreement as a magnet school with less than 75 percent minority enrollment, though this definition has been altered slightly through the subsequent *Sheff* agreements. As of the most current agreement, the reduced isolation setting definition looks at the percentage of black and Hispanic students in an interdistrict magnet school (rather than the percentage of non-white students, which had been used previously) and includes all settings in which minority Hartford resident students are enrolled through the Open Choice program.

While not included in the definition of reduced isolation settings, there are other notable ways for the state to try to meet the quantitative goals set forth in the *Sheff* agreements. Students

<sup>6</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-226h.

<sup>7</sup> 45 Conn. Supp.630 (1999).

<sup>8</sup> All agreements require the adoption, or lack of disapproval, by the legislature before they are considered a court order.

enrolled in schools above the 75 percent black or Hispanic enrollment threshold can be counted if the school is operating pursuant to an approved enrollment management plan (EMP) and black and Hispanic enrollment does not exceed 80 percent of all student enrollment. This exception is limited to two years, at most, unless a school is specifically mentioned in the *Sheff* agreements.<sup>9</sup> Students who are enrolled in schools designated as “lighthouse schools” can also be counted towards compliance with the agreement.<sup>10</sup> Minority Hartford resident students who participate in a summer academy are counted as having been enrolled in a reduced isolation setting. Minority Hartford resident students who participate in an interdistrict cooperative program are accounted for in the goal calculations, but enrollment in this program is given less weight than full-time enrollment at a magnet school, as this program is designed as a supplement to the regular school day, rather than a replacement for full time enrollment.

*Performance goal history.* As previously noted, the 1996 court ruling did not include specific numeric benchmarks for reducing isolation. The Phase I agreement was the first major legal document that outlined what success looked like. In 2003, the Phase I agreement set benchmark such the number of minority Hartford resident students enrolled and educated in reduced isolation settings was compared to the total number of minority Hartford resident students.

Within the Phase I agreement, the initial goal was set such that 30 percent of minority Hartford resident students were to be enrolled in reduced isolation settings. It is mentioned in the agreement that “the 2002-2003 comparable percentage is approximately 10%.” After being reset to 19 percent in the 2008 Phase II agreement, this goal has increased steadily with every new agreement and extension, as shown in Table 1-2.

**Table 1-2. *Sheff* Agreement Goal Levels**

|                     | Year(s) covered | % of minority Hartford resident students in reduced-isolation settings |
|---------------------|-----------------|--|
| Phase I             | 2003-2007       | 30%  |
| Phase II            | 2008-2013       | Increased from 19 to 41%*  |
| Phase II extension  | 2013-2014       | 41%*   |
| Phase III           | 2013-2015       | 43.5 or 44%  |
| Phase III extension | 2015-2016       | 47.5%  |

\*The Phase II agreement and extension included an alternate goal of 80% of demand.

Source: PRI analysis of *Sheff* documents

The state has met the compliance goal in five years since the Phase II agreement was in effect (2008-2009 school year), increasing the percentage of minority Hartford students in reduced-isolation settings from 11.5 percent in 2006 up to 47.5 percent in 2014.

The preliminary report for the 2015-2016 school year, using October 2015 data, indicates that the relevant calculated percentage is 45.5. While this is shy of the 47.5 percent goal for this year, that figure demonstrates remarkable progress since the 2003 agreement. Still, the *Sheff* agreements are explicit in stating that meeting the goals of agreement do not absolve the state

<sup>9</sup>Under the Phase II agreement, five schools adhering to approved EMPs were specifically included in the calculations.

<sup>10</sup> Per the Phase III agreement, lighthouse schools are “high quality schools or schools with the potential to become high quality schools designated for investment and initiatives designed to increase educational outcomes in priority school district schools serving neighborhood or city-wide student populations.” Lighthouse schools are not choice schools.

from responsibility to “increase further the number of Hartford-resident minority students in reduced isolation settings.”<sup>11</sup>

It is important to note that the threshold for what constitutes a reduced isolation setting is somewhat arbitrary, as any numerical level will be.<sup>12</sup> A school with 75 percent black and Hispanic enrollment is unlikely to be fundamentally different than a school with 74 or 76 percent black and Hispanic enrollment. To this end, the agreements allow students to be counted in the calculations when the black and Hispanic enrollment percentage of any particular magnet school is between 75 and 80 percent and at other times allow students in other circumstances to be included. However, the agreements as written still include language that creates a cliff, where all minority Hartford resident students are counted as being included until either one more black or Hispanic student is enrolled or one less non-black, non-Hispanic student is enrolled, at which point none of the students at that school count towards the goal. Illustrating this situation, CSDE notes in its summary of 2015’s enrollment figure that the 47.5 percent goal was missed by the narrowest of margins:

*Enrollment data originally provided by Hartford in August 2015 indicated that one of the Hartford Public Schools participating in Reverse Choice<sup>13</sup> was compliant with the desegregation standard of the Phase III Stipulation. After Hartford provided updated data suggesting that this school was no longer compliant, discrepancies relating to changes in racial/ethnic coding for students were discovered, and the school’s data was re-examined. This process resulted in corrections to the racial/ethnic coding in the data. The final corrected data supplied by Hartford indicates that this school is short of the standard by one student. Because of this, the school’s entire Hartford-Resident minority student population is not counted toward compliance in the goal calculation. Under the terms of the agreement, this changes the percentage of Hartford-Resident minority students in reduced isolation settings from 47.9 percent in the State’s internal preliminary data to the 45.5 percent in the final 2015 data presented here.*

In this instance, there was no flexibility afforded for going just over the 75 percent cliff as the school in question was not a magnet school. As previously discussed, students enrolled in a magnet school with between 75 and 80 percent black or Hispanic enrollment can be counted towards the compliance goal in certain circumstances, per the *Sheff* agreements.

There are additional attempts at mitigating these possible enrollment cliffs elsewhere in the *Sheff* agreements. For example, though the statute authorizing grants for interdistrict magnet schools caps minority enrollment at 75 percent for each school, the Phase III agreement specifies that magnet schools with between 75 and 80 percent minority enrollment should be eligible for

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<sup>11</sup> Phase II Stipulation and Proposed Order, II. D.

<sup>12</sup> C.G.S. 10-226b refers to racial imbalance and avoids assigning a particular numeric definition. Instead, racial imbalance is based on instances where the proportion of minority students in a school “substantially exceeds” and “substantially falls short” the district-wide proportion.

<sup>13</sup> Reverse Choice is a reference to the instances where suburban students are enrolled in non-magnet Hartford public schools through the Open Choice program.

the magnet school grants, provided there is “good cause” for being over the 75 percent threshold and that the enrollment is subject to a suitable EMP.

The same concept is applied in the Phase III extension requirement that the incoming class for each RESC-operated *Sheff* magnet school have a minimum of 50 percent of enrollment from Hartford resident students. Rather than withholding grant monies entirely for magnet schools with fewer than this number, funding is reduced only in proportion to the number of students by which the requirement is missed. The handling of this requirement still incentivizes compliance with the requirement, without being overly punitive for small fluctuations in enrollment. There are also allowances, through waivers, made for magnet schools with existing enrollment requirements for “partner districts.”<sup>14</sup>

*Other requirements.* Besides creating the overall metric and calculation for the reduced isolation goal, there have been several other provisions of note in the *Sheff* agreements. The Phase II agreement from 2008 included a notable alternative goal of meeting 80 percent of the demand for enrollment in reduced isolation settings, with additional steps necessary if less than 65 percent of demand is met. While this goal was accepted as part of the agreement, it created at least the appearance of an unintentional incentive for the state, or related actors, to try to limit demand, which was measured by the number of minority Hartford resident applicants to the magnet system. While there was no evidence that demand was being limited to achieve this goal (demand and overall enrollment steadily increased throughout the years the Phase II agreement was active), this alternative goal was not included in the Phase III agreement (or the extension of the same).

Many of the administrative requirements within the agreement are handled by the state administered Regional School Choice Office (RSCO), which was largely developed based on the Phase II agreement. Within that agreement, and subsequent agreements, there are many administrative requirements regarding the role of RSCO, and the rights of the plaintiffs to access data and summary information.

There are more specific terms within some of the agreements. For instance, the most recent *Sheff* agreements contain language requiring that Hartford Public Schools and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) have a uniform marketing, recruitment, and lottery system coordinated by CSDE, which is in addition to RSCO being charged with developing a comprehensive marketing plan for the entire *Sheff* magnet system. Beyond administrative requirements, the agreements sometimes include specific requirements for the availability of additional seats in existing magnet schools and the development and placement of entirely new schools or extensions of the grade levels served in existing magnets.

While there are many specific requirements in place for magnet schools, less specific attention is given to the Open Choice program within the agreements. The Open Choice program relies on suburban districts voluntarily making seats available for Hartford students. Districts typically have a great deal of latitude in determining what their overall ideal capacity is, so even a district with falling enrollment can choose to reduce expenses and allow overall enrollment to

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<sup>14</sup> “Partner districts” are typically towns that made a contribution to the building or renovation of the magnet school, or that otherwise have contractual agreements with the magnet operator.

shrink. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, there is relatively little financial incentive for suburban districts to enroll additional students from areas outside their own towns.

*Current status.* The most recent *Sheff* agreement, the Phase III extension, is in place for the 2015-2016 school year, expiring on June 30, 2016. Provisions within the agreement required that the parties begin work, through a mediator, on a Phase IV agreement that was to be completed no later than July 1, 2015. A Phase IV agreement was not completed prior to that deadline, and no agreement has been announced at the time of this report (roughly 10 months after the deadline). Per the Phase III extension, “the plaintiffs reserve the right to seek judicial relief” since no agreement was reached by August 1, 2015.

Within the last year, news accounts of the case suggest the state may be unhappy with the recent year-to-year agreements and with any plan that relies primarily on the building of new or expanded magnet schools.<sup>15</sup> The state was also reluctant or otherwise unable to meet other reporting dates, as specified in the Phase III extension.<sup>16,17</sup> Logistically, it may become more difficult to expand the number of seats available to meet enrollment goals as the calendar approaches the beginning of the next school year. However, both the 2008 Phase II agreement and the 2013 Phase II extension were judicially approved in April of those years, before being adopted by the legislature shortly thereafter.

## State Education Funding

Besides the *Sheff* case, which deals primarily with isolation, other legal challenges have affected state education policy. In 1977, the Supreme Court in *Horton v. Meskill*<sup>18</sup> ruled on a challenge to the state’s education funding system, which was followed by two other cases, one in 1982 and the other in 1985. Currently, *CCJEF v. Rell*<sup>19</sup>, a case filed in 2005 also challenging the constitutionality of the state’s education funding system, is in trial in superior court.

*Horton v. Meskill.* The *Horton v. Meskill* case challenged the constitutionality of the state’s system for financing education. Specifically, the plaintiffs in the case challenged that the mechanisms for funding free, public education in the state, namely a flat per student state grant and municipal property taxes, resulted in substantially unequal educational opportunities. The Connecticut Supreme Court agreed, saying “the present system of financing education in Connecticut ensures that, regardless of the educational needs or wants of children, more educational dollars will be allotted to children who live in property-rich towns than to children who live in property-poor towns.”<sup>20</sup> Further, the Connecticut Supreme Court explained in this

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<sup>15</sup> Rabe Thomas, Jacqueline. "State Pushes to End Court Oversight of Hartford School Desegregation." The Connecticut Mirror. September 4, 2015. Accessed April 1, 2016. <http://ctmirror.org/2015/09/04/state-pushes-to-end-court-oversight-of-hartford-school-desegregation/>.

<sup>16</sup> Megan, Kathleen. "*Sheff* Desegregation Plaintiffs Back In Court." Courant.com. December 22, 2015. Accessed April 1, 2016. <http://www.courant.com/education/hc-Sheff-plaintiffs-seek-numbers-1222-20151222-story.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Rabe Thomas, Jacqueline. "State Drags Feet on Disclosing School Desegregation Data." The CT Mirror. December 22, 2015. Accessed April 1, 2016. <http://ctmirror.org/2015/12/22/state-drags-feet-on-disclosing-school-desegregation-data/>.

<sup>18</sup> 172 Conn. 615 (1977).

<sup>19</sup> 295 Conn. 240 (2010).

<sup>20</sup> 172 Conn. at 633.

ruling that “in Connecticut, elementary and secondary education is a fundamental right, [and] that pupils in the public schools are entitled to the equal enjoyment of the right.”<sup>21</sup>

Similar to the *Sheff* ruling almost two decades later, the court did not order a particular remedy, but instead found “the fashioning of a constitutional system for financing elementary and secondary education in the state is not only the proper function of the legislative department but its expressly mandated duty....”<sup>22</sup> In response to this ruling, the legislature put in place a revised education funding system, known as the guaranteed tax base (GTB) formula. This new system was phased in over several years, and included a minimum expenditure requirement for school districts. This plan also included hold harmless provisions, where wealthier districts continued to receive the previous flat per pupil grant.

This funding system was challenged by the same plaintiffs in what is known as *Horton v. Meskill III*.<sup>23</sup> In its 1985 decision, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court’s ruling that the GTB formula was constitutional, while putting in place criteria for determining whether a funding system was constitutional. This criteria was threefold: 1) plaintiffs must show that the funding system results in disparities that “continue to jeopardize the plaintiffs’ fundamental right to education;” 2) if plaintiffs are able to so demonstrate, the state must show that there is a legitimate and non-arbitrary state policy aimed at reducing or minimizing education disparities; and 3) the state must demonstrate that the disparities resulting from the state’s policies are not so great as to render them unconstitutional.<sup>24</sup>

Using these criteria, the court found that while the plaintiffs had met the burden of the first step (showing significant disparities), the state had met its burden in the second (the state had an equalization policy through the GTB formula) and in the third part (the disparities from the GTB formula were significantly less than those present in the flat per pupil system challenged in the original *Horton v. Meskill*, and were partly the result of demographic changes at the town level). The court also dismissed the plaintiffs appeal that aimed to guarantee that the state provided 50 percent of educational spending.

**Education Cost Sharing.** While the state’s GTB-based funding policy was upheld as constitutional in *Horton v. Meskill III*, it was not without its flaws or detractors. In 1988, the legislature moved from the GTB formula to the education cost sharing (ECS) formula to determine state education funding distribution. The ECS formula placed greater emphasis on student need, rather than only relative town wealth, and included a “foundation level” of per pupil funding. This foundation level was intended to be the minimum funding level necessary for a school to adequately educate its pupils. The ECS formula was designed to provide grants such that between state funding and local funding, schools were funded at or above this minimum level. Figure 1-2 shows the statutory foundation levels since FY 1990, the first year of the ECS formula was implemented.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> 172 Conn. at 648.

<sup>22</sup> 172 Conn. at 650.

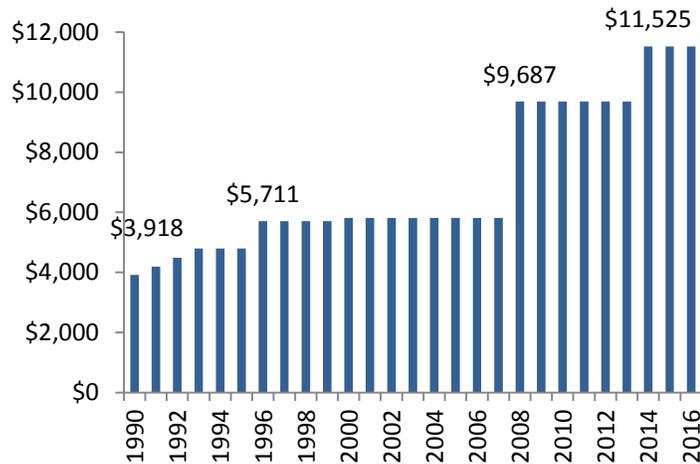
<sup>23</sup> *Horton v. Meskill III*. 195 Conn. 24 (1985).

<sup>24</sup> 195 Conn. at 38.

<sup>25</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-262f (9).

Since its 1990 implementation date, state education funding has nominally been provided through ECS-based grants. However, a few major factors have led to substantial variation from ECS-calculated grant levels, including lack of the full funding levels necessary to implement the formula and hold-harmless provisions that provide grants to towns above their formula-based need. Because of the deviation from the formula-derived grants, the ECS-based municipal grants have been overridden in statute by specific funding levels in the last few years.

**Figure 1-2 Foundation Levels (Per Pupil \$)**



Source: C.G.S. Sec. 10-262f(9).

***Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Financing v. Rell.*** In 2005, the Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Financing, Inc. (CCJEF) brought suit against the state claiming that the state failed to provide an educational system with “suitable and substantially equal educational opportunities.” CCJEF sought judgment that the educational finance system was responsible for the lack of equality of opportunities and was, therefore, unconstitutional and void.

In 2010, the Connecticut Supreme Court overturned a lower court’s dismissal of the case as not “justiciable.” The court held that the “Connecticut Constitution guarantees Connecticut’s public school students educational standards and resources suitable to participate in democratic institutions, and to prepare them to attain productive employment and otherwise to contribute to the state’s economy, or to progress on to higher education.”

Given this decision by the supreme court, the plaintiffs were able to continue their pursuit of judgment on the constitutionality of the state’s education funding system. The trial began on January 12, 2016, in Connecticut Superior Court, with arguments expected to continue through May 2016.



### Statutory Requirements and Authorizations

This chapter provides a summary of the requirements and authorizations for each public school choice program. All public schools in the state are subject to the same testing and accountability standards in regard to student achievement. The most notable difference between program types is regarding the operators and governing bodies of each program, which include local or regional school boards and districts, the state, and various private non-profit organizations. Table 2-1 provides a summary of the major statutory requirements and authorizations by choice school type.

**Table 2-1. Summary of Grades Served, Governance, and Primary Statutory Reference for Choice School Programs**

|                              | Grades Served | Governance   | Primary Statutory Reference    |
|------------------------------|---------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Interdistrict magnet schools | PreK-12       | Many different educational entities or non-profits by approval                   | C.G.S. Sec. 10-264l            |
| Technical high schools       | 9-12          | State Board of Education   | C.G.S. Sec.10-95               |
| Charter schools              | K-12          | Non-profit management organization, approved by SBE or local/regional school BOE | C.G.S. Sec.10-66aa             |
| Agri-science centers         | 9-12          | Local or regional BOE with a consulting committee                                | C.G.S. Sec.10-64               |
| Open Choice                  | K-12          | Local or regional BOE  | C.G.S. Secs.10-266j & 10-266aa |

Source: PRI analysis of Connecticut General Statutes

**Interdistrict magnet schools.** Interdistrict magnet schools have been established in Connecticut as a way of reducing racial, ethnic, and economic isolation. When these grants were first established in 1995, grants were authorized for interdistrict magnet schools that “support diversity” and feature “a special and high quality curriculum.”<sup>26</sup> Grants were provided on a per pupil basis to local and regional school districts that operated interdistrict magnets, with the amount of the grant depending on the percentage of students enrolled from the host district or any participating district, as shown in Table 2-2. (More information on current interdistrict magnet grants is provided in Chapter 3.)

While this system did not explicitly limit the number of students enrolled from any one town, there were financial incentives to this end. Likewise, it is unlikely that a town trying to

<sup>26</sup> P.A. 95-226, Sec. 17.

establish an interdistrict magnet with a low proportion of students from other towns would receive the necessary permissions from the state to be considered an interdistrict magnet.

The statutory scheme for interdistrict magnet schools was expanded and refined in 1997 as part of legislative action in response to the 1996 *Sheff* decision.<sup>27</sup> Public Act 97-290 required that the state education department make recommendations for the expansion of the interdistrict magnet system, a change from the department’s previous responsibility of merely administering the interdistrict magnet grant program. Under the 1997 act, in order to be eligible for consideration for an interdistrict magnet grant, enrollment from any single district was required to be capped at 80 percent of total enrollment.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 2-2. 1995 Interdistrict Magnet Grant Funding Tiers**

| Level of Single Town Enrollment | Level of Funding  |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <30%                            | 90% of foundation   |
| 30 to 60%                       | 90 to 60% of foundation, inverse to the level of enrollment |
| >60% but less than 90%          | 0 to 60% of foundation, inverse to the level of enrollment  |

Note: Information on foundation levels was presented in Figure 1-2.

Source: P.A. 95-226.

*Governance.* Under current law, there are several different educational entities that can operate an interdistrict magnet program, including any local or regional board of education, a regional educational service center (RESA), a state university or community-technical college, or an independent college. Non-profit organizations can also apply to the education commissioner for approval to operate an interdistrict magnet school.

Each interdistrict magnet school, regardless of the entity that operates it has some kind of oversight board. Magnets operated by local or regional school districts are overseen by local or regional boards of education in the same manner as those entities oversee neighborhood schools. Non-local or non-regional school districts are governed by whichever entity has jurisdiction over the organization involved, e.g., a board of trustees for a university and college, or a council for a RESA. While the general responsibilities and requirements remain the same regardless of the type of operator, grants and tuition differ based on a combination of location, operator, and sending districts, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

*New interdistrict magnet moratorium.* In 2009, the legislature adopted Special Act 09-6, which, among other things, created a moratorium on funding new interdistrict magnet programs or capital expenses, except for those that directly addressed *Sheff* agreements and goals, until the education commissioner created a statewide interdistrict magnet plan. Originally due by January 1, 2011, that plan was not created. However, P.A. 15-77 changed the reporting date for the comprehensive statewide interdistrict magnet plan to October 1, 2016. CSDE reports that it is working on this plan in anticipation of the fall 2016 deadline.

**Technical high schools.** The Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) is the only school choice program operated by the state directly, rather than by a local or regional board of education, RESA, college or university, or other non-profit organization. The system

<sup>27</sup> P.A. 97-290.

<sup>28</sup> Codified in C.G.S. Sec. 10-264*l*. A school may exceed the 80 percent threshold for one year given “good cause.”

was created by the State Board of Education and offers “full-time, part-time and evening programs in vocational, technical and technological education and training.”<sup>29</sup>

The technical high school system is governed by a board, composed of the commissioners of the Economic and Community Development and Labor Departments, as well as members appointed by the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission and the State Board of Education. The board chair is appointed by the governor and sits as a nonvoting ex-officio member of SBE.

By statute, there is regular contact between the administration of CTHSS and the legislature.<sup>30</sup> Meetings are held to discuss how CTHSS is meeting the needs of Connecticut’s employers.

**Charter schools.** Charter schools are public schools authorized by a local school district or by the state, but operating independently of any local or regional school district. Charter schools can be operated by any “person, association, corporation, organization or other entity, public or independent institution of higher education, local or regional board of education or two or more boards of education cooperatively, or regional educational service center” except that no non-public school can be established as a charter school.<sup>31</sup>

Charter schools were first statutorily introduced in P.A. 96-214, in two distinct categories: local and state. Local charter schools are those that are authorized by a local or regional board of education, while SBE authorizes state charter schools.

Enrollment at a charter school is limited to 250 students, or, for a state charter school, enrollment is also limited to 25 percent or less of the public school enrollment in the municipality where the charter is located. A charter school serving grades K-8 is limited to 300 students instead of 250. Charters may be allowed to exceed these limits if SBE finds the school has “a demonstrated record of achievement.”

Preference for approval of a new charter school is given to applications that indicate a purpose of serving particular groups of students, defined either by characteristics of the students themselves (e.g., single gender, special education, indicators of low-income, history of low academic performance, or history of social or behavioral difficulties), or of the districts or towns in which the students reside (e.g., priority districts,<sup>32</sup> districts with greater than 75 percent minority student enrollment, or districts with a history of substandard academic performance). Preference must also be given to applications that include enrollment and retention strategies for attracting students from the groups described above. An application for the establishment of a state charter school must also be given preference if the school is to be located at a work site or if a college or university is the applicant.

Charter applications are reviewed by either SBE or a local BOE. State law also identifies charter schools as a possible means by which to reduce racial isolation for public school students,

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<sup>29</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-95(b).

<sup>30</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-95h.

<sup>31</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-66bb.

<sup>32</sup> As defined by C.G.S. Sec. 10-266p.

and requires SBE to consider “the effect of the proposed charter school on the reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation in the region in which it is to be located” when reviewing an application. However, charter schools have not been used specifically for this purpose in Connecticut. Instead, charter schools have primarily been charged with improving or replacing underperforming or substandard schools in disadvantaged school districts, according to the other preferences previously discussed.

A charter may be granted for up to five years and may be renewed by the same board that initially approved it. Individual charter schools are overseen by governing organizations identified in the charter application. The state can place a charter school on probation or revoke its charter for several reasons, including failure to demonstrate satisfactory student progress or a deficient governing body that fails to properly oversee administration of the school.

At least half of the teachers providing instruction in a charter school must be certified educators. Teachers with temporary certification are not counted towards this requirement. If requested, teachers employed by a local or regional BOE must be granted a two to four year leave of absence, without compensation from the local BOE, in order to work at a charter school.

*New charter schools.* Current law provides that no more than four new charter applications may be approved between FYs 13 and 17, except in the case that two of the applications approved in that time frame are for schools with a mission and purpose of multi-lingual education, or other programs focused on educating English language learners.<sup>33</sup>

**Agri-science centers.** Agri-science centers serve students in grades 9-12, and may only be operated by local or regional school districts. Districts that do not host an agri-science center themselves must designate a center or centers where students from their district can enroll. Sending districts can work out agreements with agri-science center host districts on the number of students from that town who can enroll at an agri-science center. Sending districts are obligated by statute to provide enrollment opportunities for at least the three-year average number of students from their district enrolled at an agri-science center.

An agri-science center is required to have a consulting committee to advise the operating board of education. Two representatives from each participating district serve on a center’s advisory board. Representatives are required to have knowledge in the areas of agriculture or aquaculture. Additional oversight is provided by a CSDE education consultant who conducts an on-site program review of each the center every three to five years.

Districts operating agri-science centers are required to have a five-year plan to increase racial and ethnic diversity. These plans “shall reasonably reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the area of the state in which the center is located.”<sup>34</sup>

**Open Choice enrollment.** The open choice enrollment program, called in statute the “state-wide interdistrict public school attendance program,” allows students from certain urban towns to attend schools in suburban districts and suburban students to attend schools in those urban district. This program was established by P.A. 97-290, folding in a program established in

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<sup>33</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-66bb(f)(2).

<sup>34</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-65a(b).

1967.<sup>35</sup> In 1997, the program was limited to receiving resident students from, or sending resident students to, Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport. The list of cities eligible to participate in the interdistrict attendance program was expanded to include New London for the 2000-2001 school year. The purpose of this program, as described in C.G.S. Sec. 10-266aa, is to:

- improve academic achievement;
- reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation or preserve racial and ethnic balance; and
- provide a choice of education programs.

Within this program, suburban school districts identify what seats they have available to offer to students from the nearest urban center and vice versa. Per the reduced isolation goals of the program, there are limits set on the number of non-minority, urban resident students who may attend suburban schools through this program – specifically, the proportion of non-minority students enrolled this program from Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, and New London must be at or below the overall proportion of non-minority resident students in that municipality.

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<sup>35</sup> See C.G.S. Sec. 10-266j on intercommunity programs for disadvantaged children.



## Chapter 3

### Choice School Statutory Funding Requirements

State funding, normally through a series of grants, is available in some form for every type of choice school. Most choice programs rely on some combination of Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding, an additional state grant, and tuition paid by a sending district. This chapter provides a look at current statutory funding requirements and allowances, summarized first in Table 3-1, an followed by greater detail about each different program.

**Table 3-1. Summary of Choice School Grant Funding**

|                              | ECS Funding                                  |  | Other Grants   |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|
|                              | Are enrolled students counted in ECS formula | If counted, what district receives ECS grant | What choice school supplemental grants are available?                                    |
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools | Yes  | Sending school district                      | Between \$3,000 and \$13,054 per student ( <i>see Table 3-3 for detail</i> )             |
| Technical High Schools       | No   | N/A  | N/A (completely funded by the state)   |
| Charter Schools              | Local: Yes                                   | Local: Local district                        | Local: up to \$3,000 in some circumstances   |
|                              | State: No                                    | State: N/A                                   | State: \$11,000 per student  |
| Agri-science Centers         | Yes  | Sending school district                      | \$3,200 per student, with bonuses possible for some centers of \$600 or more per student |
| Open Choice Program          | Yes  | ½ to sending and ½ to receiving district     | \$3,000 to \$8,000 per student   |
| Neighborhood Schools         | Yes  | Local district                               | N/A  |

Note: Neighborhood school funding, provided by local or regional school districts, is included in this table for comparative purposes, but is not discussed elsewhere in the chapter.

Source: PRI analysis of Connecticut General Statutes

**State grants for choice school operations.** Most schools, whether they are choice schools or not, are at least partially funded by state grants, the most common of which is the ECS grant. As shown in Table 3-1 and explained in greater detail in this chapter, there is considerable variation as to whether students enrolled in choice programs are accounted for in the ECS calculations. Likewise, as ECS grants are awarded to towns, rather than school districts, statute dictates which town or towns receive the ECS grant monies when choice students are part of the calculation.

In all cases except for enrollment through the Open Choice program (as detailed below), when a student is counted towards ECS grant calculations, the funding for that student is provided to the town in which the student resides. It is worth noting that in some cases, but certainly not all, towns sending students to choice programs may receive ECS grant funding for a student in excess of any tuition, or other expenses, paid by the sending town for the student. This is substantially different than in cases where students are not counted towards a towns ECS grant (i.e., when enrolled in a technical high school or state charter school).

The state also provides a series of program-specific choice school supplemental grants. These supplemental grants are designed to incentivize the hosting or operation of choice school programs. These choice school grants are awarded to the operator of the school.

**Other financial information for choice schools.** Some choice schools potentially have other sources of revenue outside of state grants, including tuition from a sending district. Choice school building projects are sometimes reimbursed differently by the state than are non-choice building projects, or given preferential treatment for approval. This information is summarized in Table 3-2, and discussed in greater detail for each choice school type.

**Table 3-2. Summary of Non-Grant Financial Information for Choice Schools**

|                              | Tuition Charged to Sending Town?  | Bonding  | Responsible for Special Education Costs? |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools | Sometimes – when allowed, tuition is capped at the net of operating expenses less grants and other revenues | 80% reimbursement, though there is a currently a moratorium on new projects outside of the <i>Sheff</i> region | Sending District                         |
| Technical High Schools       | N/A   | N/A  | State                                    |
| Charter Schools              | Local: Per student, based on formula and prior funding level  | Grants available at commissioner discretion. Preference for projects with matching non-state funds             | Local: Sending District                  |
|                              | State: N/A  |  | State: Sending District                  |
| Agri-science Centers         | Up to 59.2% of the ECS “foundation level” per student*  | 80% reimbursement for full time centers. Per student funding for shared time centers                           | Sending District                         |
| Open Choice Program          | No, except if the student resides in a town without a high school   | N/A  | Sending District                         |
| Neighborhood Schools         | N/A   | 10-70% new construction, 20-80% renovations**  | Local District                           |

\*The foundation level for FY 16 is \$11,525.

\*\*Non-choice school projects can qualify for the higher renovation reimbursement rate if the district demonstrates that new or replacement building would be cheaper than renovation. Regional school districts get a 10 percentage point bonus for construction, with a cap at 85%.

Source: PRI analysis of Connecticut General Statutes

*Special education funding and responsibility.* Financial responsibility for students identified as having special needs remains with a student’s resident town (i.e., sending district), except for students enrolled in CTHSS. Along with the financial responsibility, a resident town retains responsibility, along with the student’s parent or guardian, for developing a student’s individualized education program (IEP), even when the IEP is implemented in the choice school.

**Interdistrict magnet funding.**<sup>36</sup> While the core of interdistrict magnet school funding is similar for all magnet programs, there are important differences based on the operator and location of the magnet program. Interdistrict magnet grants are awarded contingent upon meeting certain town and racial reduced isolation goals. A summary of the various interdistrict magnet school grant levels is provided in Table 3-3 (next page).

Magnets formed prior to 2005 can have up to 80 percent of enrollment from a single town, while schools that have been opened since then are limited to 75 percent enrollment from a single town. The commissioner can award start-up grants of up to \$75,000 per school for new magnets that assist the state with meeting the goals of the *Sheff* stipulations.

Because magnets are used to pursue reduced racial and ethnic isolation of students, magnet grants are only awarded to schools where the percentage of minority (i.e., non-white and non-Hispanic) students is between 25 and 75 percent of total enrollment.<sup>37</sup> The education commissioner can waive the racial or town composition requirements for one year “for good cause” but this waiver cannot be applied in consecutive years, except as specifically allowed in the 2008 or 2013 *Sheff* agreements.

In some cases, magnet schools are able to enroll students on a part-time basis, though part-time programs are generally being phased out (with the exception of the Greater Hartford Academy of Arts). Authorized part-time magnets typically receive grants at 65 percent of the full time grant they would otherwise qualify for, provided the part-time students are enrolled at the school at least half-time. In one case, a grant is awarded at 32.5 percent of the equivalent full-time level for students attending for one semester.

*Magnets operated by a local or regional BOE.* Unless otherwise classified, approved local or regional magnet operators receive base grants of \$7,085 per pupil for out-of-town students and \$3,000 per in-district student enrolled at the magnet, but there are many variations on this amount.<sup>38</sup> For instance, magnets with at least 55 percent of enrollment from a single town receive the base grants. A magnet program hosted by a local or regional BOE that is operating

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<sup>36</sup> The figures presented here are for FY16 funding levels as of the date of this report. There are multiple instances where current state laws deal only with funding levels for specific time periods that are no longer relevant and these have not been included in this discussion.

<sup>37</sup> The statutory non-white, non-Hispanic definition of minority is used for overall magnet grants (C.G.S. Sec. 10-226a). In contrast, for the purposes of measuring reduced isolation within the Phase III *Sheff* agreement (and extension), the percentage of black or Hispanic students is used, while all other races or ethnicities are grouped with non-Hispanic white students.

<sup>38</sup> As used in this chapter, “in-district” means a resident of the town that is operating a magnet, is hosting a magnet, or from a town with greater than 50 percent of total school enrollment, unless otherwise specified. “Out-of-town” refers to the inverse complement of “in-district.”

pursuant to the terms of the 2008 or 2013 *Sheff* agreement receives the same \$3,000 base grant for in-district students, but receives \$13,054 per out-of-district student.

**Table 3-3. Interdistrict magnet grants per pupil levels and requirements (FY 2016)**

| Eligibility requirement  | In district (or majority town) grant per student  | Out of district grant per student   |
|--|---|---|
| Baseline interdistrict magnet grant (magnets with less than 75% enrollment from a single town, but 55% or greater enrollment from a single town)           | \$3,000   | \$7,085   |
| RESC-operated, with <55% from any single town  | \$7,900   | \$7,900   |
| RESC-operated, started in 2001, with between 55 and 80% enrollment from a single town  | \$8,180 per student up to the number of in-district students enrolled in Oct. 2013<br>\$3,000 per student for any student beyond the number of in-district students enrolled in Oct. 2013 | \$8,180 per student up to the number of out-of-district students enrolled in Oct. 2013<br>\$7,085 per student for any student beyond the number of out-of-district students enrolled in Oct. 2013 |
| <i>Sheff</i> -related, non-local BOE operated magnet, or Great Path Academy, with 50-60% of enrollment from Hartford                                       | \$10,443  | \$10,443  |
| 2015-2016 and later incoming class of a <i>Sheff</i> -related, non-local BOE operated magnet, or Great Path Academy, with <50% of enrollment from Hartford | \$10,443 per Hartford student   | \$10,443 per non-Hartford student for most students<br>Special case - \$7,900 per non-Hartford student*   |
| <i>Sheff</i> -related, local BOE operated magnet   | \$3,000   | \$13,054  |

Note: Table does not include grant levels for part-time programs

\*Per the Phase III extension and C.G.S. Sec. 10-264I(c)(3)(D)(ii), if more than 50% of the incoming class of a *Sheff*-region, non-local BOE-operated magnet is from towns other than Hartford, the grant level is lowered for half of the portion of non-Hartford resident enrollment beyond 50% of total enrollment. For example, if there were 48 Hartford-resident students and 52 non-Hartford-resident students enrolled in the incoming class for the 2015-2016 school year, the operator would receive \$10,443 for all 48 Hartford students and 51 of the non-Hartford students, and \$7,900 for one non-Hartford student.

Source: C.G.S. Sec. 10-264I.

*Interdistrict magnet operated by an entity other than a local or regional board of education.* Because the state's primary method of funding education is tied to municipalities, magnets operated by a RESC, college or university, or other entity besides a local or regional BOE are funded differently. ECS funding is calculated using characteristics of a town's population. While many of the same magnet grants are available for these non-municipal magnet operators, there are other considerations involved:

- Non-municipal magnet operators are subject to an expenditure limit of 120 percent of the state average per pupil expenditure. For the 2013-14 school year, the maximum allowable threshold was \$18,216 per pupil. The threshold

is to be set in the December previous to the fiscal year, in order to give magnet operators ample opportunity to budget within the limit. Grant applications with budgets that exceed the threshold may be approved by the commissioner if the magnet is budgeting for “extraordinary programming needs.”

- A RESC-operated magnet with less than 55 percent enrollment from a single town receives a grant of \$7,900 per student, regardless of residence. If the RESC-operated magnet has more than 55 percent enrollment from a single town, that magnet receives the baseline magnet grant of \$7,085 per out-of-district student (from towns other than the town with 55 percent enrollment) and \$3,000 per student from the town with 55 percent enrollment.
- A magnet operated pursuant to the 2008 and 2013 *Sheff* stipulations and by a RESC, college or university, a non-profit organization, or through a cooperative arrangement pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 10-158a with less than 60 percent of students from Hartford received a grant of \$10,443 per pupil through FY 15.

There are several provisions of the interdistrict magnet school grant statute that appear to pertain to just one or a few targeted magnet programs. This is often the case when provisions from a *Sheff* stipulation are codified in statute. Examples are:

- RESC-operated magnets opened in the fall of 2001 are eligible for distinct tiers of per pupil grants if the schools had enrollment between 55 and 80 percent from a single town in 2008. If either of the two schools opened in 2001 met the criteria, the school would receive a grant of \$8,100 per student up to the number of in-district and out-of-district students the school enrolled in 2013, while receiving the (lower) baseline per pupil grant for any students enrolled beyond the number enrolled in 2013.<sup>39</sup>
- A magnet that opened in 2014 and is operated an independent college is eligible for a reduced per student grant for students attending for more than half of the school year and a further reduced grant for students enrolled for just one semester. If the one school that currently meets those criteria also has less than 60 percent of its enrollment from Hartford residents, that school receives 65 percent of its equivalent full-time grant for students enrolled at least half time and 32.5 percent of its equivalent full-time grant for students enrolled for one semester.

*Other considerations.* If the funding provided by the state for magnet grants does not allow grants to be paid at full award values, all interdistrict magnet grants are to be reduced proportionate to the levels set in statute. A magnet school with more than a half-day, but less

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<sup>39</sup>C.G.S. Sec. 10-2641 (c)(3)(C).

than a full-day, program is eligible to receive a grant at 65 percent of the level it would be eligible for if it was a full-day program.

**Tuition charged to towns.** Most magnet operators are authorized to charge tuition to the resident towns of enrolled students, with the exception of *Sheff* magnets operated by a local BOE. Generally, the level of tuition is limited to the net per pupil expenditure at the magnet, less the state grant and any other revenue. In the past, sending town participation in magnet programs was controlled by participation agreements between the sending town and the magnet operator. While towns can still use participant agreements, the state currently operates using direct enrollment.

*Direct enrollment.* Since 2007, interdistrict magnet schools have been able to directly enroll students based on available seats and parent request – that is, without the need for approval of or agreement with the sending town.<sup>40</sup> Prior to P.A. 07-3, which authorized statewide direct enrollment, towns had some control over whether their residents could enroll in magnet schools and the costs thereof, through the creation of a participation agreement between the potential sending town and the magnet operator. Under P.A. 07-3, towns can now be charged tuition for resident students without their approval or consent.

*Tuition charged by Sheff magnet schools operated by a local or regional BOE.* At present, magnets operated by a local or regional BOE pursuant to the *Sheff* agreements are prohibited from charging tuition. The Phase I agreement (2003) specified that *Sheff* magnet schools could charge tuition for enrolled students who reside in *Sheff* towns (who would also be covered under participant agreements) and non-*Sheff* towns (who were generally not covered under such agreements). However, in 2009, the legislature prohibited Hartford public schools from charging tuition for enrollment in Hartford-operated magnet schools.<sup>41</sup> This prohibition was made in recognition that the magnet grants to Hartford-operated magnets were higher than elsewhere in the state, and was intended to encourage suburban promotion and use of the magnet program by limiting potential suburban costs. In 2013, this prohibition was expanded from Hartford-operated magnet schools to all *Sheff* magnet schools operated by a local BOE.<sup>42</sup>

*Preschool tuition.* As part of the overall implementation of and response to the *Sheff* Phase II agreement, in 2008 CSDE “issued a memorandum/notice regarding *Sheff* informing school districts that any sending districts are responsible for paying tuition for preschool students attending magnet schools, regardless of whether the sending district provides preschool to its own regular education students.”<sup>43</sup> In subsequent years, some towns objected to being obligated to pay for preschool services, especially when the town itself did not make preschool services available to its own residents. In 2011, several districts, led by Regional School District Number 10, petitioned CSDE for a declaratory ruling on the subject. In 2012, CSDE’s hearing officer

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<sup>40</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-264l(j).

<sup>41</sup> P.A. 09-6 (Sept. Sp. Session).

<sup>42</sup> P.A. 13-247.

<sup>43</sup> Office of Legislative Research, C.G.A. “Decision Barring the State from Mandating School Districts Pay Tuition for Preschool Students Who Attend Interdistrict Magnet Schools.” 2012-R-0500. December 3, 2012.

issued a decision that sending districts were not financially responsible for preschool services outside of their town.<sup>44</sup>

**Tuition charged to parents or guardians.** RESC-operated magnet schools offering pre-school programs may charge tuition to parents or guardians.<sup>45</sup> Like tuition for all other grade levels, this tuition is limited to actual per pupil costs, less the per pupil interdistrict magnet grant from the state and any other revenue. Tuition is to be charged to parents or guardians on a sliding scale based on parent or guardian income, with no tuition charged to a parent or guardian with income below 75 percent of the state median income level. The operator may charge CSDE for tuition not paid by a parent or guardian because of their income level.

*Bonding.* The state provides grants of 80 percent of the costs of magnet school construction projects statewide. While magnet school projects that assist the state with meeting the goals of the *Sheff* agreements can be approved, there is a moratorium on magnet school construction for the projects in the rest of the state until the commissioner develops a statewide interdistrict magnet plan (due fall 2016).

**RESC-operated magnet funding.** In many cases the grant for a magnet school operated by a RESC, or other non-BOE entity, is higher than the equivalent magnet grant for a municipally-operated school. Similarly, RESCs operating magnets in the *Sheff* region may charge tuition (to the sending district for grades K-12, or to parents or guardians for preschool), where municipally-operated magnets are prohibited from doing so. It is important to note that this discrepancy seems intended to compensate for the difference in ECS grant funding between the types of operators.

A magnet school operated by a local BOE receives ECS grant funding for enrolled in-district students and then receives an additional magnet grant beyond the ECS funding. As RESCs do not receive ECS funding, they rely on tuition and the (generally higher) magnet school grants to fund magnet school operations.

**Technical high schools.** The technical high school system is completely state-run and state funded. Students in the technical high school system are the financial responsibility of the state. Towns are not charged any tuition for students enrolled in the technical high school system and those students are not included in any town's ECS calculation. The State Board of Education has financial responsibility regarding CTHSS students identified as in need of special education services. Bonding for CTHSS projects is the full responsibility of the state.

**Charter schools.** State and local funding for charter schools varies by whether the school is a local charter school or a state charter school. At present, there are 23 state charter schools and one local charter school. In either instance, the local school district is responsible for funding the reasonable cost of special education that is beyond the per pupil funding the charter school receives in state and local grants.

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<sup>44</sup> *Regional School District No. 10, et al. v. State of Connecticut Department of Education*, Declaratory Relief Case No. 11-1 (August 6, 2012).

<sup>45</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-264l(k)(2)(C) and C.G.S. Sec. 10-264o(c)(4).

*Local charter schools.* When students are enrolled at a local charter school, those students are considered in the resident town's ECS formula grant. The grant goes to the municipality where the student resides. Local districts are required to meet two standards in their payments to local charter schools: 1) the amount specified per student in the school's charter and 2) at least as much as the local district's per pupil cost from two years prior. In this instance, the per pupil cost is derived by comparing local district program expenditures, including prior funds sent to the local charter, to the number of public school students for whom the district is financially responsible.

Local charter schools can receive an additional grant of up to \$3,000 per pupil. This is conditional upon agreement between the local board of education and its chosen collective bargaining unit regarding "staffing flexibility" in the local charter school. The staff flexibility agreement must be approved by SBE. Funding for this state grant is provided within available resources.

*State charter schools.* Students enrolled in state charter schools are not counted within the ECS grant. Instead, towns are provided grants of \$11,000 per student enrolled in a state charter school located within the town, which must then be passed along to the operators of the state charter school.

*Sheff.* A newly-approved state or local charter school may be awarded up to \$75,000 for start-up costs if it assists the state in meeting the goals of the 2013 *Sheff* stipulation.

*Charter school bonding.* Charter schools may apply for state grants to fund school building projects, general building improvements, and repayment of debt incurred for building projects.<sup>46</sup> While most particulars of the charter school capital funding grant program are left to the discretion of the commissioner, state law specifies that preference must be given when project applications include a source of matching funds from a source other than the state.

Charter school project grants greater than \$250,000 are subject to a 10 year minimum use requirement. If a charter school ceases operation of, or otherwise stops using, a building paid for with charter school project grants within 10 years of the initial award, the school is responsible for repaying the remaining unamortized balance back to the state.

**Agri-science and technology education centers.** Funding for agri-science centers is multi-sourced and includes a tiered reimbursement schedule for certain milestones of enrollment. While most centers provide full-time education, funding differs for those centers with students who receive non-agricultural education in a different school district.

Tuition is paid by a student's resident town to the host district of the agri-science center. The tuition level is capped in statute at 59.2 percent of the ECS "foundation level."<sup>47</sup> Since the start of FY 15, the foundation level has been \$11,525. Therefore, the maximum allowable tuition level for agri-science centers is \$6,822. Tuition is scaled down proportionately for centers with part-time enrollment.

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<sup>46</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-66hh.

<sup>47</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-65(b).

In addition to tuition from the sending district, agri-science centers receive a state grant of \$3,200 per student, except when this grant is lowered proportionately for part-time enrollment. Unlike most other choice school grants, this funding is based on prior year enrollment, versus current enrollment.

Dependent on additional grant monies being available, the state offers additional grants for meeting certain enrollment thresholds. If a center has an out of district enrollment of greater than 150 students, the center is reimbursed an additional \$500 per student enrolled in the center. If a center qualified for and received this grant in one year, but falls below the 150 out-of-district student enrollment threshold in the next year, this additional reimbursement is phased out. A center will receive \$400 per student in the first year falling below the 150 out-of-district level, \$300 for the second year below, \$200, for the third year below, and \$100 for the fourth year below. A center that either has not previously met the 150 out-of-district student threshold or is more than four years removed from that enrollment level is eligible for a \$60 per student grant.

If agri-science grant money is available after the base grant and initial threshold grants are awarded, centers may be awarded an additional \$100 per student. If funding remains available after this, remaining funds are distributed to those centers with the greatest number of out of district students above the 150 out-of-district threshold.

Taken all together, a full time agri-science center with fewer than 150 out-of-district students could receive between \$3,200 and \$3,360 (\$3,200 plus \$60 plus \$100) per student. Those above the threshold could receive upwards of \$3,800 (\$3200 plus \$500 plus \$100 plus additional money based on the center’s share of all out-of-district students beyond the 150 threshold). In 2013, only eight of the 19 agri-science centers enrolled a total number of students greater than 150, regardless of residence, leaving eligibility for either iteration of out-of-district bonus grants relatively limited.

*Bonding.* Capital projects to build, expand, renovate, or equip agri-science centers are eligible for state reimbursement of 80 percent of all costs. Projects applied for prior to July 1, 2011, were reimbursed at the higher 95 percent rate. For part-time agri-science centers, the project reimbursement rate is calculated on a per pupil basis.

**Open Choice.** The Department of Education provides a grant, within available appropriations, to local or regional boards of education that receive students through the Open Choice program. The amount of the grant is dependent upon the percentage of student enrollment in a receiving school district that is through the program, ranging from \$3,000 per student for Open Choice enrollment under two percent of the district total, up to \$8,000 per student for Open Choice enrollment of four percent or greater. Table 3-4 shows the statutory

**Table 3-4. Open Choice Enrollment Grants**

| Percent of total school district enrollment that attend through open choice program | Grant amount to receiving district per Open Choice student |
|---|--|
| Less than 2%  | \$3,000  |
| 2% to less than 3%  | \$4,000  |
| 3% to less than 4%  | \$6,000  |
| 4% or greater   | \$8,000  |

Source: C.G.S. Sec. 10-266aa(g).

grant levels based on the percentage of students in a receiving district who are enrolled through the Open Choice program.

Besides these grants, a district with more than 4,000 students can receive a grant of \$6,000 per pupil for the year if the education commissioner determines the district has increased Open Choice enrollment by at least 50 percent over the previous year.

State law limits the proportion of non-minority students to all students who are sent from Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, or New London to suburban districts to the same proportion from the prior year or less, beginning in the 2001-2002 school year. The education commissioner has authority to withhold grants.

*ECS grant.* Students enrolled through the Open Choice program are counted within ECS grant calculations. The per pupil ECS grant is split evenly between the sending district and receiving district. This direct splitting of ECS grant monies is a unique feature of the Open Choice enrollment program among all choice program funding systems.

*Bonding.* Funding is not changed (or specially provided) for capital projects for the Open Choice program.

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### Enrollment

Enrollment numbers for public school choice programs offer a look at current use and trends. For a choice program such as magnet schools with a goal of reducing racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, looking at student race, ethnicity, and indicators of economic need can help determine how well those goals are being met.

This chapter looks at student enrollment trends in the state. In particular, this chapter compares:

- students living in the *Sheff* region to those in Connecticut overall (as well as to the group of students not in the *Sheff* region); and
- students residing in Hartford to students residing throughout the rest of the *Sheff* region.

Within these groupings, each school choice program is examined based on current enrollment, growth in enrollment, racial and ethnic composition, prevalence of students who are identified as having special needs, and the proportion of student enrollment that is eligible for free or reduced price lunch (as an indicator of economic need).

Through this analysis of choice school enrollment, particularly enrollment in choice programs in *Sheff* towns, notable observations include the following:

- While overall enrollment is declining, enrollment in choice school programs has risen since 2007.
  - Magnet school enrollment increased at a greater rate than any other choice program from 2007 to 2013.
- A substantially higher percentage of public school students from the *Sheff* region are enrolled in choice schools, as compared to the choice school enrollment proportion in the rest of the state.
  - Enrollment from residents of *Sheff* towns accounts for over a third of all magnet school enrollment throughout the state.
- Taken as a whole, choice programs have substantially higher proportions of black and Hispanic students than non-choice public schools.
- The racial composition of student enrollment varies considerably depending on the specific program involved.
- Statewide, students in school choice programs were slightly less likely to be identified as being in need of special education services than the overall student population.
- Students enrolled in a choice school program were more likely to be eligible for free or reduced price lunch than the overall student population.

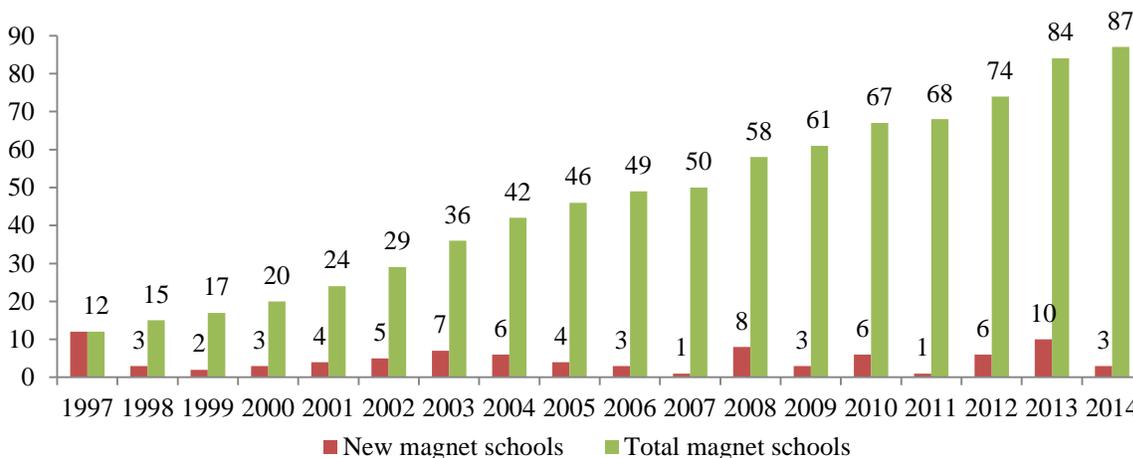
Enrollment is based on availability of seats. To lay the groundwork for the enrollment review, information on the number and growth of choice schools is provided first.

**Number of choice schools.** As of 2015, there are 151 choice schools in Connecticut. Fifty-eight percent (88) are interdistrict magnet schools; technical high schools make up 13 percent (20); charter schools, 16 percent (24); and agri-science centers, 13 percent (19).

The *Sheff* region is home to 53 of the choice schools (35 percent). For that region, there are many more interdistrict magnet schools, 44, than of any other type (3 each of technical high schools, charter schools, and agri-science centers).

The number of interdistrict magnet schools has grown statewide since 1997, as shown in Figure 4-1. In 1997, there were 12 magnet schools—now there are 87 statewide.

**Figure 4-1. Number of Magnet Schools in Connecticut**



Note: The 1997 figure includes all magnets opened prior to 1997

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data.

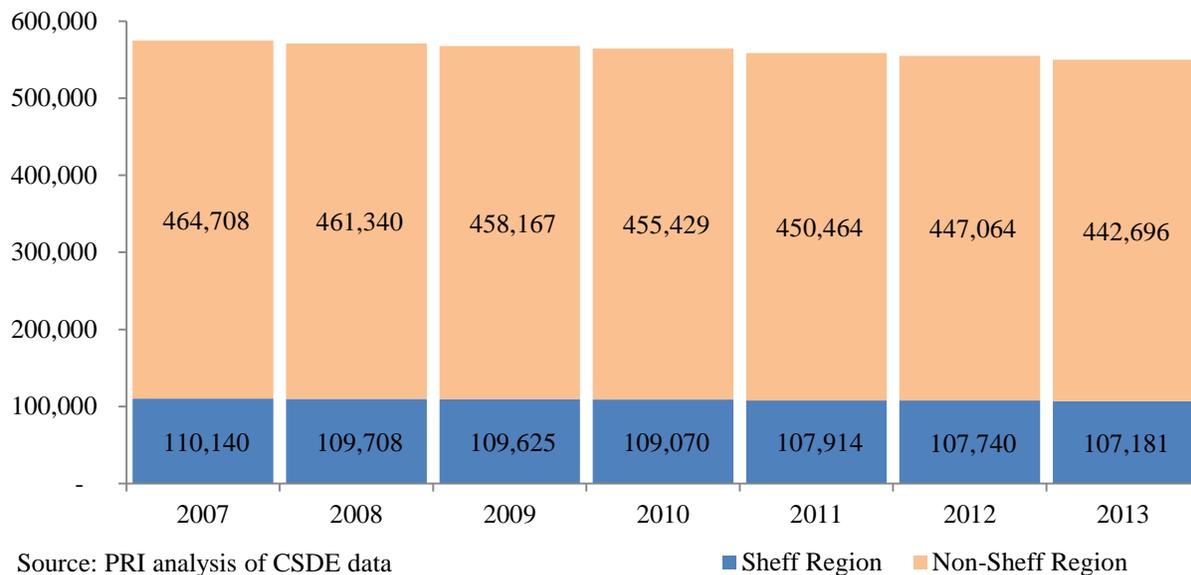
### ***Sheff* Region Compared to State**

**Current enrollment overall.** The students living in the 22 towns and cities making up the *Sheff* region accounted for 19.5 percent of the statewide student population in October 2013: 107,181 students resided in the *Sheff* region, while statewide there were 550,000 students.<sup>48</sup> The statewide number represented a 4.3 percent decline from peak public school enrollment of 575,000 in 2007. The decline in the *Sheff* region (2.7 percent) has been slower than in the rest of the state (4.7 percent). These trends led to slight growth in the proportion of the state’s public school students who reside in the *Sheff* region (from 19.2 percent in 2007 to 19.5 percent in

<sup>48</sup> Enrollment data in this chapter, and summaries of the same, is based on CSDE student-level data from October 1 of each year from 2007 to 2013, inclusive, (except as noted). To protect student privacy, when a descriptive grouping results in a group of fewer than 20 students, the specific number has been suppressed.

2013). Figure 4-2 displays the enrollment growth comparison between the *Sheff* region and the rest of the state.

**Figure 4-2. Public School Student Enrollment (Sheff region compared to all other) (2007-2013)**



*Comparison group methodology.* Throughout this chapter, and much of the report, the *Sheff* region designation is used to apply to only the 22 towns named in the *Sheff* agreements. This approach is reasonable and appropriate for much of the town-based comparative analysis. However, like any designation by region, it is not without its limitations.

*Sheff* town resident enrollment, in particular, accounts for most, but not all, of the enrollment in *Sheff*-related magnet schools. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, students from *Sheff* towns make up 78 percent of *Sheff* magnet school enrollment. A broader designation of towns, such as the transportation zone (also discussed in Chapter 6), could be used to define the Hartford region and capture a greater percentage of the students enrolled in *Sheff* magnets.

However, towns relatively near Hartford, but outside of the *Sheff* region, generally send a lower percentage of their students to *Sheff* magnets than do the *Sheff* towns. Collectively, the *Sheff* towns send 11.8 percent of their resident students to *Sheff* magnet schools. While this rate is skewed because of exceptionally high Hartford resident participation, the rest of the *Sheff* towns send 7.4 of their residents to *Sheff* magnets, compared to the substantially lower rate of 4.8 percent of students sent from the other towns within the transportation zone. The only non-*Sheff* town to send their resident students to *Sheff*-magnets at a higher rate than the non-Hartford *Sheff*-town average is New Britain (at 9.1 percent of student enrollment in 2013).

**Current enrollment in school choice programs.** In 2013, 10.6 percent of public school students statewide were enrolled in some kind of choice program. This proportion is higher in the *Sheff* region, where 16.9 percent of students were enrolled in choice programs.

*School choice enrollment by program type.* Table 4-1 breaks out enrollment by choice program type in the *Sheff* region and statewide (as well as the non-*Sheff* region). Statewide, interdistrict magnets have the largest enrollment of any school choice program (34,500 students in October 2013), followed by technical high schools (10,700 students), charter schools (7,100 students), agri-science centers (3,100 students), and students enrolled through the Open Choice program (2,700). Over six percent of all public school enrollment was in an interdistrict magnet school in 2013, while no other type of choice program individually accounted for more than two percent of student enrollment.

**Table 4-1. Choice School Enrollment by Program and Region (2013)**

| Choice Program Type             | A   | B  | B-A   |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
|                                 | <i>Sheff</i> Region<br>(22 Towns)<br>(% of <i>Sheff</i> region) | Statewide<br>(% of state)                    | Non- <i>Sheff</i> region<br>(% of the rest of<br>state) |
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools    | 12,505 (11.7%)  | 34,541 (6.3%)                                | 22, 036 (5.0%)  |
| Technical High Schools          | 1,476 (1.4%)  | 10,698 (1.9%)                                | 9,222 (2.1%)  |
| Charter Schools                 | 1,888 (1.8%)  | 7,093 (1.3%)                                 | 5,205 (1.2%)  |
| Agri-Science Centers            | 339 (0.3%)  | 3,108 (0.6%)                                 | 2,769 (0.6%)  |
| Open Choice Program             | 1,908 (1.8%)  | 2,657 (0.5%)                                 | 749 (0.2%)  |
| Total Choice Program Enrollment | 18,116 (16.9% of total <i>Sheff</i> region enrollment)          | 58,097 (10.6% of total statewide enrollment) | 39,981 (9.0%)   |
| Total Enrollment                | 107,181 (19.5% of statewide students)                           | 549,877 (total statewide students)           | 442,696 (80.5% of statewide students)                   |

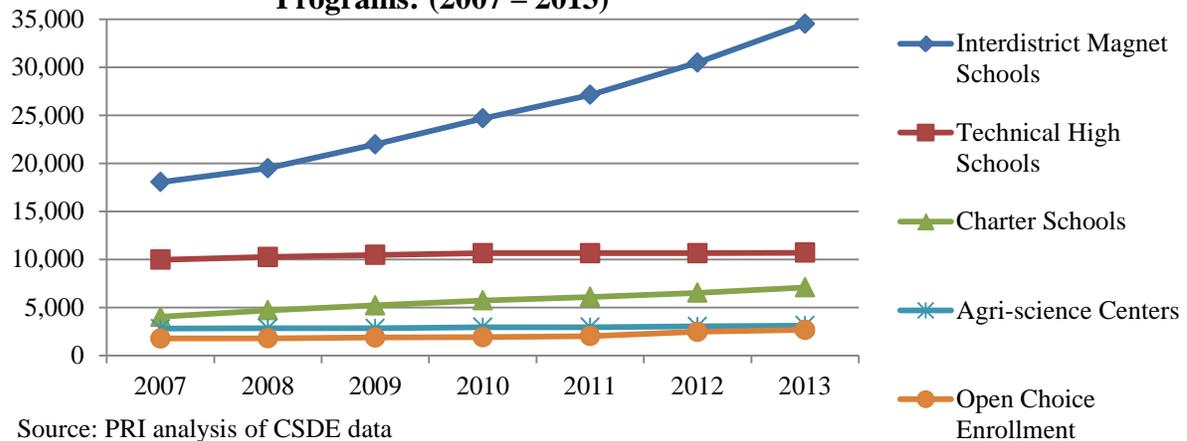
Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

*Sheff region proportion of choice school enrollment.* The *Sheff* region has higher levels of enrollment than might be expected in some choice programs and lower than might be expected in others, as compared to the proportion of students in the state who reside in *Sheff* towns (19.5 percent). Students in magnet schools in the *Sheff* region represent over one-third of all magnet school students in the state (36 percent) and over a quarter of all charter school students (27 percent). The Open Choice program is most prominently used in the *Sheff* region, which accounts for 72 percent of all students in the program statewide. In contrast, *Sheff* region enrollment at technical high schools is 14 percent and agri-science centers, 11 percent.

**School choice enrollment growth by program.** All school choice programs saw an increase in statewide enrollment from 2007 to 2013. The increase was most prominent in magnet school programs, which accounted for almost 80 percent of the increase (16,500 more students enrolled in 2013 than 2007). The increase in enrollment corresponds with the increase in number of magnet schools, discussed earlier in this chapter.

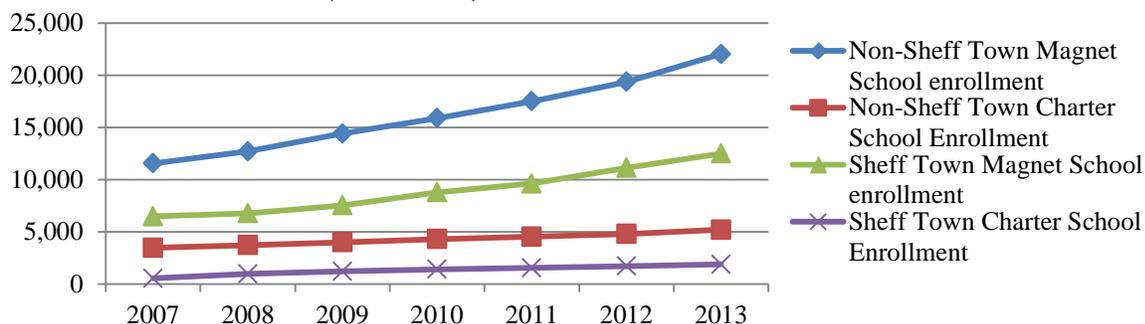
With over 3,000 more students enrolled in 2013 than 2007, charter schools were the only choice program besides magnet schools to see enrollment increase by over 1,000 students. Figure 4-3 shows this growth and the relative lack of increase in other choice school enrollment levels.

**Figure 4-3. Statewide Enrollment Trends for All School Choice Programs: (2007 – 2013)**



**School choice enrollment growth overall.** Enrollment in choice school programs increased statewide by 59 percent from 2007 to 2013 (an increase of 21,000 students). The increase in choice school enrollment is seen more prominently in the *Sheff* region (91 percent growth, or 8,600 students) than elsewhere, but is also present in the rest of the state (47 percent growth, or 12,900 students). Growth in magnet and charter school enrollment has occurred throughout the state. Figure 4-4 shows the enrollment trends by *Sheff* region, as compared to the rest of the state, for interdistrict magnet schools and charter schools. The statewide trends are mirrored in both the *Sheff* and non-*Sheff* regions, with magnet school enrollment growing more quickly than charter schools.

**Figure 4-4. Magnet and Charter School Growth by Region (2007-2013)**



Note: Of the total number of students counted within the non-Sheff Town Magnet School figure, 3,500 are attending Sheff-magnets, but do not live within the Sheff towns. The overall trends remain if Sheff-magnets and non-Sheff magnets are looked at regardless of town of resident.

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

## Student Characteristics in Choice School Programs

This section explores some characteristics of students, by region, choice school type, or both. Information is provided on racial composition, special education, and economic need.

**Racial composition.** The *Sheff* region is racially similar to the entire state, but differences are more evident when comparing the *Sheff* region to the rest of the state. As shown in Table 4-2, the percentages of students who are Asian, black, or Hispanic are all higher in the *Sheff* region than in the rest of the state, leading to a lower percentage of students who are white in the region.

**Table 4-2. Race/Ethnicity by Region, All Public School Enrollment (2013)**

| Race/Ethnicity                            | Connecticut | Sheff Region | Non-Sheff Region |
|---|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| American Indian or Alaska Native          | 0.3%        | 0.2%         | 0.3%             |
| Asian                                     | 4.6%        | 6.8%         | 4.1%             |
| Black or African American                 | 13.0%       | 19.5%        | 11.4%            |
| Hispanic/Latino of any race               | 21.2%       | 22.9%        | 20.8%            |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 0.1%        | 0.1%         | 0.1%             |
| Two or More Races                         | 2.4%        | 2.7%         | 2.3%             |
| White                                     | 58.4%       | 47.8%        | 61.0%            |

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

Data on racial or ethnic identification was most readily available and accurate for the years 2010 through 2013. There has been relatively little change in the racial composition of students during this time. However, the percentage of white students has fallen from 61.5 percent to 58.4 percent, due to the combination of small increases in the percentage of Hispanic, multi-racial, and Asian student enrollment.

**Hartford students and the rest of the Sheff region.** Within the *Sheff* region, there is a substantial difference between the racial composition of students who reside in Hartford and

**Table 4-3. Race/Ethnicity by Region, All Public School Enrollment (2013)**

| Race/Ethnicity                            | Connecticut | Hartford | Non-Hartford Sheff Region |
|---|-------------|----------|---------------------------|
| American Indian or Alaska Native          | 0.3%        | 0.3%     | 0.2%                      |
| Asian                                     | 4.6%        | 1.9%     | 8.3%                      |
| Black or African American                 | 13.0%       | 39.5%    | 13.7%                     |
| Hispanic/Latino of any race               | 21.2%       | 51.7%    | 14.5%                     |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 0.1%        | 0.2%     | 0.1%                      |
| Two or More Races                         | 2.4%        | 2.3%     | 2.8%                      |
| White                                     | 58.4%       | 4.2%     | 60.5%                     |

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

those who reside in the rest of the region (Table 4-3). As of 2013, over 90 percent of students living in Hartford are Hispanic (51.7%) or black (39.5%). The percentage of Hispanic students living in Hartford is triple the percentage of Hispanic students

outside of Hartford in the *Sheff* region, and this is nearly the case for the percentage of black students as well.

As is the case statewide, white students are in the majority outside of Hartford in the *Sheff* region (60.5%), but represent only 4.2% of student enrollment among Hartford residents. The percentage of Asian students in the *Sheff* region is much higher outside of Hartford (8.3%) than in Hartford (1.9%). Because of the relative over-representation of Hispanic and black students in Hartford, the meaning of reduced isolation has shifted from looking at the percentage of non-white students to considering the percentage of black and Hispanic students

**Racial composition of school choice programs.** Taken as a whole, choice programs have substantially higher proportions of black and Hispanic students than non-choice public schools. However, racial composition of student enrollment varies considerably depending on the specific program involved. As shown in Table 4-4, the racial composition of the technical high school system most closely resembles the state as a whole. Students enrolled in agri-science centers are more likely to be white and less likely to be either black or Hispanic than might be expected given statewide and *Sheff* region demographic averages.

**Table 4-4. Racial Composition of Choice Schools, Statewide (2013)**

| School type                  | Black        | Hispanic     | White        | Other       |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools | 31.5%        | 30.4%        | 30.1%        | 8.0%        |
| Technical High Schools       | 12.7%        | 32.8%        | 50.0%        | 4.4%        |
| Charter Schools              | 60.4%        | 25.8%        | 9.5%         | 4.2%        |
| Agri-science Centers         | 9.3%         | 11.6%        | 75.6%        | 3.5%        |
| Open Choice Enrollment       | 57.6%        | 32.4%        | 6.5%         | 3.5%        |
| <b>All Choice Programs</b>   | <b>31.6%</b> | <b>29.3%</b> | <b>32.6%</b> | <b>6.5%</b> |
| Connecticut                  | 13.0%        | 21.2%        | 58.4%        | 7.4%        |
| <i>Sheff</i> Region          | 19.5%        | 22.9%        | 47.8%        | 9.8%        |

Note: Percentages sum to a whole across rows  
 Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

*Interdistrict magnet schools.* There are nearly equal proportions of white, black, and Hispanic students in magnet schools. While the maximum attainable level of reduced isolation involves having all schools and programs mirror the statewide racial proportions, it would be difficult to argue that magnet programs are equally or more racially isolated than many neighborhood schools.

*Charter schools and Open Choice program.* The proportion of black and Hispanic students in charter schools and enrolled through the Open Choice program is much higher than the state average, with a corresponding lower percentage of white students. This makes sense, as both of these programs are designed via state law to attract students residing in urban settings, which, in Connecticut, have much higher proportions of minority students than suburban and rural districts.

The two programs present students with much different peer racial compositions. Charter schools are most typically located in urban settings with primarily minority students. Students participating in the Open Choice program are grouped together for this analysis, students placed through the Open Choice program represent a small percentage of the total enrollment of the schools in which they are placed. The racial composition of students enrolled through the Open

**Table 4-5. Racial Composition of Choice Schools, Sheff Region (2013)**

| School type                  | Black | Hispanic | White | Other |
|------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|-------|
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools | 35.1% | 34.0%    | 21.6% | 9.3%  |
| Technical High Schools       | 25.1% | 44.9%    | 25.8% | 4.2%  |
| Charter Schools              | 77.5% | 10.1%    | 8.3%  | 4.0%  |
| Agri-science Centers         | 31.3% | 11.8%    | 54.3% | *     |
| Open Choice Enrollment       | 60.3% | 33.9%    | 3.3%  | 2.5%  |
| All Choice Programs          | 41.3% | 31.9%    | 19.2% | 7.5%  |

\* Information is suppressed to protect student privacy when the underlying count is under 20 students.

Note: Percentages sum to a whole across rows.

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

4-5. There is also a greater proportion of Hispanic students in magnet schools and the technical high school system in the *Sheff* region than the state as a whole. However, Hispanic enrollment in charter schools in the *Sheff* region is substantially lower than in charter schools statewide, or as might be expected given the overall proportion of Hispanic students in the *Sheff* region.

**Students identified as in need of special education services.** Students identified as being in need of special education services were 12.8 percent of statewide public school enrollment in 2013, up from 12.0 percent in 2007. Statewide, students in an school choice program were slightly less likely to be identified as in need of special education services (10.1 percent), as shown in Table 4-6. The proportion of students identified as being in need of special education services in the technical high school system or in charter schools was lower than expected based on statewide rates. For technical schools, this discrepancy may be partly explained by achievement requirements in the admissions process (discussed in Chapter 5). It is less clear why this discrepancy exists for charter schools, though lack of appropriate facilities and staff to deal with some specialized needs may play a role.

**Table 4-6. Special Education Percentage of Choice School Enrollment, Statewide (2007-2013)**

| School type                  | 2007  | 2009  | 2011  | 2013  |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools | 7.9%  | 8.2%  | 8.6%  | 10.0% |
| Technical High Schools       | 7.8%  | 7.3%  | 7.1%  | 8.2%  |
| Charter Schools              | 7.6%  | 7.5%  | 8.1%  | 8.6%  |
| Agri-science Centers         | 14.9% | 12.6% | 11.2% | 12.2% |
| Open Choice Enrollment       | 16.5% | 17.2% | 19.3% | 19.3% |
| All Choice Programs          | 8.8%  | 8.6%  | 8.8%  | 10.0% |
| Connecticut                  | 12.0% | 12.0% | 12.2% | 12.8% |

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

Interdistrict magnet schools seem to have fewer students in need of special education services than expected, though not as low as in CTHSS or charter schools. The percentage of students identified as in need of special education services in agri-science centers in 2013

Choice program is therefore not representative of the schools in which students are placed. Students enrolled through the Open Choice program are most commonly enrolled in suburban, predominantly white, school districts.

**Racial composition of choice school students in the Sheff region.** Within the *Sheff* region, the proportion of black students is higher than the state average per choice program in every case, as shown in Table

matched statewide levels, although the proportion has been slowly declining throughout the time period examined.

On first glance, students in need of special education services appear overserved by the Open Choice program. While that remains true compared to statewide averages, it is important to remember that the Open Choice program serves primarily students from urban districts and, in particular, students from Hartford. As shown in Table 4-7, the percentage of students from Hartford identified as being in need of special education services is higher (17.0 percent) than the statewide average. While this may explain part of the higher than expected need for special education services, the percentage of students from Hartford identified as in need of special education services is even higher for those enrolled in the Open Choice program (21.4 percent). Determining possible reasons for this discrepancy is outside the scope of this report.

**Table 4-7. Special Education Percentage of Choice School Enrollment, by Region (2013)**

| School type                                 | Statewide | Sheff Region | Sheff, non-Hartford | Hartford |
|---|-----------|--------------|---------------------|----------|
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools                | 10.0%     | 11.1%        | 8.6%                | 13.7%    |
| Technical High Schools                      | 8.2%      | 8.6%         | 10.5%               | 6.7%     |
| Charter Schools                             | 8.6%      | 7.7%         | 7.2%                | 8.0%     |
| Agri-science Centers                        | 12.2%     | 9.4%         | 9.5%                | 8.9%     |
| Open Choice Enrollment                      | 19.3%     | 20.6%        | *                   | 21.4%    |
| All Choice Programs                         | 10.0%     | 11.5%        | 8.6%                | 13.8%    |
| Region Total (regardless of Choice Program) | 12.8%     | 13.1%        | 12.0%               | 17.0%    |

Note: \* Information is suppressed to protect student privacy when the underlying count is under 20 students.

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

**Hartford students and the rest of the Sheff region.** Besides looking at Hartford resident students,

Table 4-7 provides information on the prevalence of students identified as in need of special education services from the rest of the *Sheff* region (i.e., excluding Hartford from the *Sheff* region). In most cases, the proportion of these students to others within the same program is lower for suburban students than either the statewide average or the proportion of students attending these programs from Hartford. One exception here is that the *Sheff* region, excluding Hartford, has a higher proportion of special education students enrolled in the technical high school system than the state as the whole, though the proportion is still below the overall rate for non-choice programs.

**Economic disadvantage and school choice programs.** The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch has increased by 8.6 percentage points since 2007 (28.7 percent to 37.3 percent), as shown in Table 4-8. In every year during that timeframe, students enrolled in a choice school program are more likely than students in neighborhood schools to be at increased risk of economic disadvantage.<sup>49</sup> Since 2012, more than half of students in an open choice program statewide have been eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

<sup>49</sup> For the purposes of this study, PRI staff relied on CSDE data regarding eligibility for free or reduced price lunch as the only attainable and readily available indicator of possible economic need.

**Table 4-8. Percent Enrollment with an Indicator of Economic Need, Statewide (2007-2013)**

| School type                  | 2007  | 2009  | 2011  | 2013  |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools | 53.9% | 55.8% | 55.0% | 54.3% |
| Technical High Schools       | 26.9% | 34.6% | 40.7% | 45.6% |
| Charter Schools              | 59.0% | 63.1% | 71.0% | 73.2% |
| Agri-science Centers         | 18.9% | 23.2% | 24.2% | 25.3% |
| Open Choice Enrollment       | 51.8% | 60.4% | 64.3% | 67.3% |
| All Choice Programs          | 44.3% | 49.5% | 52.4% | 54.1% |
| Connecticut                  | 28.7% | 32.6% | 35.2% | 37.3% |

Note: The indicator of economic need used for this analysis was whether a student was identified as being eligible for either free or reduced price lunch.

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

As was the case with racial composition, students enrolled in programs aimed primarily at urban residents (i.e., charter schools and the Open Choice program) experience much higher levels of economic risk than other choice school programs, based on enrollment data. Nearly three-quarters of students enrolled in charter schools were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in 2013, along with over two-thirds of those students enrolled through the Open Choice program.

In contrast to special education, non-Hartford residents of the *Sheff* region are noticeably more likely to be eligible for free or reduced price lunch than students from that same region who are not attending choice program (Table 4-9). This supports a finding by the authors of a comprehensive study of magnet lottery application data, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 4-9. Percent Enrollment with an Indicator of Economic Need , by Region (2013)**

| School type                                 | Statewide | Sheff Region | Sheff, non-Hartford | Hartford |
|---|-----------|--------------|---------------------|----------|
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools                | 54.3%     | 57.4%        | 38.5%               | 76.0%    |
| Technical High Schools                      | 45.6%     | 61.0%        | 44.7%               | 77.5%    |
| Charter Schools                             | 73.2%     | 75.3%        | 41.2%               | 90.6%    |
| Agri-science Centers                        | 25.3%     | 36.6%        | 33.2%               | 53.6%    |
| Open Choice Enrollment                      | 67.3%     | 71.8%        | *                   | 72.5%    |
| All Choice Programs                         | 54.1%     | 60.7%        | 39.2%               | 77.2%    |
| Region Total (regardless of Choice Program) | 37.3%     | 39.9%        | 25.8%               | 88.3%    |

\*Information is suppressed to protect student privacy when the underlying count is under 20 students.

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

<sup>50</sup> Jack Dougherty, Diane Zannoni, et al., “Who Chooses in the Hartford Region? Report 2: A Statistical Analysis of Regional School Choice Office Applicants and Non-Applicants among Hartford and Suburban-Resident Students in the Spring 2013 Lottery” (Hartford, CT: Cities Suburbs Schools Project at Trinity College, October 17, 2015), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/).

## Admissions

In order to enroll in a public school choice program in Connecticut, a student’s parent or guardian must affirmatively express interest in, or otherwise apply for, available seats. Like neighborhood schools, many choice schools are generally required to enroll all interested applicants. Unlike neighborhood schools, seats in choice school programs are limited, with demand for these seats often outpacing available supply in recent years. When there are more applicants than seats available, state law requires the use of a lottery system to offer available seats to applicants. In other cases, such as for technical high schools and agri-science centers, there are minimum qualifications necessary and a potentially competitive process for placement. Table 5-1 provides a summary of whether choice seats are filled via lottery or competitive process. This chapter describes the process used to enroll students at choice programs.

**Common requirements of choice program admissions.** Choice schools, unlike neighborhood schools, can set limits on the number of students they enroll. Like neighborhood schools, all choice programs are required to abide by the statewide prohibition of discrimination “on account of race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.”<sup>51</sup> However, choice programs must have ways of determining how many seats should be made available and of offering those seats to students when demand for the seats exceeds availability.

**Table 5-1. Choice Program Admissions Policies**

| Choice School Type           | Lottery | Minimum Qualifications |
|------------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| Interdistrict Magnet Schools | Yes     | No                     |
| Technical High Schools       | No      | Yes                    |
| Charter Schools              | Yes     | No                     |
| Agri-science Centers         | No      | Yes                    |
| Open Choice Enrollment       | Yes     | No                     |
| Neighborhood Schools         | No      | No                     |

Source: PRI analysis of Connecticut General Statutes

*Sending and receiving districts.* Each student who is enrolling in a choice program is a resident of a town that is, generally speaking, otherwise responsible for the education of that student. As discussed in Chapter 3, having a resident student enroll in a choice program in another school district may be financially beneficial to the sending district (e.g., getting the ECS grant, but not having to pay tuition for a student in a magnet school) or detrimental (e.g., having to pay tuition above and beyond the amount of the ECS grant for that student).

Choice school operators, as the district potentially receiving a student, need to know they will enroll enough students to cover the costs of operation. In many cases, hosts or operators need to meet certain enrollment requirements in order to be eligible for choice school grant funding.

<sup>51</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-15c. This provision is limited to students five years of age or older, although a board of education can allow enrollment at less than five years of age in some circumstances.

Both sending and receiving districts are sometimes provided a measure of stability, though not necessarily benefit, by state law, which typically holds that a sending district must make available to its resident students the same number of seats as has been used on average over the past three years. While there are exceptions to this rule, as will be detailed by choice program type below, this requirement is in place to ensure adequate participation in certain choice programs with relatively low demand. This can also make the number of students a district sends to programs without direct enrollment more predictable, which is helpful for sending districts when accounting for tuition costs and for enrollment totals in their own schools.

*Lotteries.* In cases where there is excess demand for seats, admission to programs without qualification standards is offered through a lottery process. When determining the step-by-step selection of students for enrollment through a lottery process, choice school operators are given authority, either directly through statute or through the approval of the education commissioner, to give preference to applicants who are siblings of students currently enrolled at the school and to students with a parent or guardian working at the school.

Lottery protocols are designed to achieve fairness and randomness in the selection process. Lotteries can also account for other items of note, so long as no group or class protected by discrimination laws is directly impacted. For instance, a lottery for multiple schools can base the results on how and whether a school was ranked by an applicant and can account for an applicant's town of residence, but cannot be based on race.

While many of these concepts apply to all choice programs, there is some variation for each of the different types of choice programs discussed in this report. This chapter will discuss variations in admissions and lottery processes.

**Interdistrict magnet school admissions.** Operators of a magnet school program generally face the same limitations for admission as any other lottery-based choice program. Seats may be offered based on what town a student resides in. Looking at town of residence is necessary for the schools to qualify for the interdistrict magnet school grants, as discussed in Chapter 3 of this report, as no more than 75 percent of the students enrolled at a magnet school may reside in the same town. Magnet schools cannot base admissions upon student ability or academic qualification.

Magnet schools cannot use race as a factor in the admissions process, though *Sheff* magnets must stay within certain racial composition thresholds in order to be considered a reduced-isolation setting when calculating compliance with the *Sheff* agreements. More information on this interaction is presented in the Chapter 6 summary of the 2015 magnet and Open Choice lottery.

**Technical high school admissions.** Admission to a technical high school is somewhat different than to most other choice programs. Unlike magnets, charters, or Open Choice placements, technical high schools may screen students based on minimum academic qualifications. Applicants to a technical high school are placed based on geography and relative rank, based on a point system that examines seventh and eighth grade transcripts, attendance record, and extra-curricular activities or community service. Applicants must also submit a written statement about their reasons for applying to the program. CTHSS publishes a document

called “CTHSS Application Process,” which indicates that applications are not considered final without the following:

- School records that indicate no serious disciplinary infractions;
- Transcripts that indicate successful completion of current grade;
- A record of immunization as required by law;
- Enrollment in Algebra I for mid ninth grade applicants; and
- Successful completion of Algebra I for tenth grade applicants;

Per the January 20, 2015, CTHSS Admissions Policy document, admissions standards and policies are internally reviewed by the admissions advisory committee, which is made up representatives of area businesses, labor groups, and local school districts. In the Hartford region, information about technical high schools is available through the RSCO office, though applications are handled by CTHSS.

**Charter school admissions.** The admissions process for a charter school must be explained in the application for the charter. Charter schools must “ensure open access on a space available basis” and “promote a diverse student body.”<sup>52</sup> Charter schools must use a lottery-based admission system, except when given specific waivers. As discussed in Chapter 2, a charter school application may indicate a purpose of serving particular groups of students, defined either by characteristics of the students themselves (e.g., single gender, special education, indicators of low-income, history of low academic performance, or history of social or behavioral difficulties) or of the districts or the resident towns of students. Lotteries for enrollment at charter schools are administered by the charter school operator, or its designee. Charter schools may apply for a waiver from use of a lottery system if the school is “designed to serve one of more of the following populations:

- (A) Students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties,
- (B) Students identified as requiring special education,
- (C) Students who are English language learners, or
- (D) Students of a single gender.”<sup>53</sup>

**Agri-science center admissions.** Unlike other choice programs, there is little in statute giving direct guidance on agri-science admissions. Like admission to technical high schools, agri-science admission can be based on meeting minimum academic qualifications, which are often based on the advice of the center’s consulting committee.<sup>54</sup> Admissions standards and application requirements can vary by the center.

A student must have completed 8th grade to be eligible to apply for admission into an agri-science center in 9th grade. Students in higher grades are also eligible to apply for a transfer into a program, and such acceptance decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Regardless of grade in school, admitted applicants must show an interest in having a career in agriculture, and

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<sup>52</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-66bb(d).

<sup>53</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-66bb(j).

<sup>54</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-64(a).

agree to participate in a supervised, occupational experience program.<sup>55</sup> The supervised, occupational experiences, which are in addition to regularly scheduled class activities, relate to the student's goals and abilities.

Each agri-science center has its own application form. Common areas included on the application forms are:

- Student essay
- Letters of recommendation (sometimes specified as personal recommendation or teacher recommendation)
- Student records (e.g., transcripts, CMT scores, discipline records, attendance records)
- Personal interviews offered to selected applicants

Students eligible for admission into agri-science center programs are only given the opportunity to apply for admission into the program; they are not guaranteed admission to the program. According to CSDE, approximately two-thirds (1,490 or 68 percent) of the 2,196 applicants from the class of 2009 were accepted into an agri-science center. Acceptance rates have historically been higher than enrollment rates. In 2014, more students were accepted into centers but chose not to enroll (700) than there were students who applied but were not offered placement (400 students), based on CSDE data.

As is the case with technical high schools, information on agri-science centers is provided to prospective Hartford-region applicants by RSCO. However, applications for placement in an agri-science center are administered by the agri-science center itself.

**Open Choice admissions.** Admission through the Open Choice program is overseen by the regional education service center (RESC) for the towns in which the program is active (Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London). When demand exceeds available seats, the RESC is instructed to administer the lottery in such a way as to “preserve or increase racial, ethnic and economic diversity.”<sup>56</sup> Within the lottery, students may be given preference for sibling enrollment, or when the student would otherwise be attending a school program that has lost its accreditation<sup>57</sup> or has been identified as “in need of improvement” under the No Child Left Behind Act.<sup>58</sup>

Students admitted through the Open Choice program must be allowed to continue in the receiving district until they graduate through high school. State law also specifies that this program may not be used as a way of recruiting students for “athletic or extracurricular purposes.”

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<sup>55</sup> Regs. Conn. State Agencies Sec.10-65-6 (1978).

<sup>56</sup> C.G.S. Sec. 10-266aa(e).

<sup>57</sup> Specifically, the school must have lost its accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

<sup>58</sup> The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 was largely replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act in December 2015.

## Chapter 6

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### Interdistrict Magnet Schools and Open Choice Enrollment in the *Sheff* Region

Interdistrict magnet schools and the Open Choice program in the Hartford region is treated differently than choice programs elsewhere in the state or other choice programs in the *Sheff* region, as these are the two programs used to measure compliance with and implementation of the *Sheff* agreements. The admission process for magnet schools and Open Choice enrollment in the Hartford area is administered by the Regional School Choice Office (RSCO), per multiple *Sheff* agreements as discussed in Chapter 1. Unlike every other choice program admission process, RSCO combines the application process for all magnet school and Open Choice seats in the Hartford area into a single application form, regardless of the magnet school operator or local or regional school district making the seat(s) available. This chapter provides detail on *Sheff*-region interdistrict magnet schools, including size and growth of the system, operators, lottery results for admission, and achievement of the goals set in the *Sheff* agreements. The main findings of this chapter are:

- Participation in Hartford region magnet schools represents nearly one-quarter of the enrollment in any choice program throughout the state. Likewise, over one-quarter of the choice schools in the state, by number, are Hartford region magnet schools.
- There are two main operators of interdistrict magnet programs in the Hartford region: Hartford Public Schools and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC).
  - CREC’s role has grown substantially as the prevalence of *Sheff* magnets has increased.
- Enrollment in Hartford region magnet schools is complicated by the requirements of the *Sheff* agreements.
  - A series of lottery protocol preferences are specified by magnet operators in order to meet the enrollment requirements of the *Sheff* agreements and state law.
- Demand for seats in Hartford region magnet schools far exceeds available capacity.

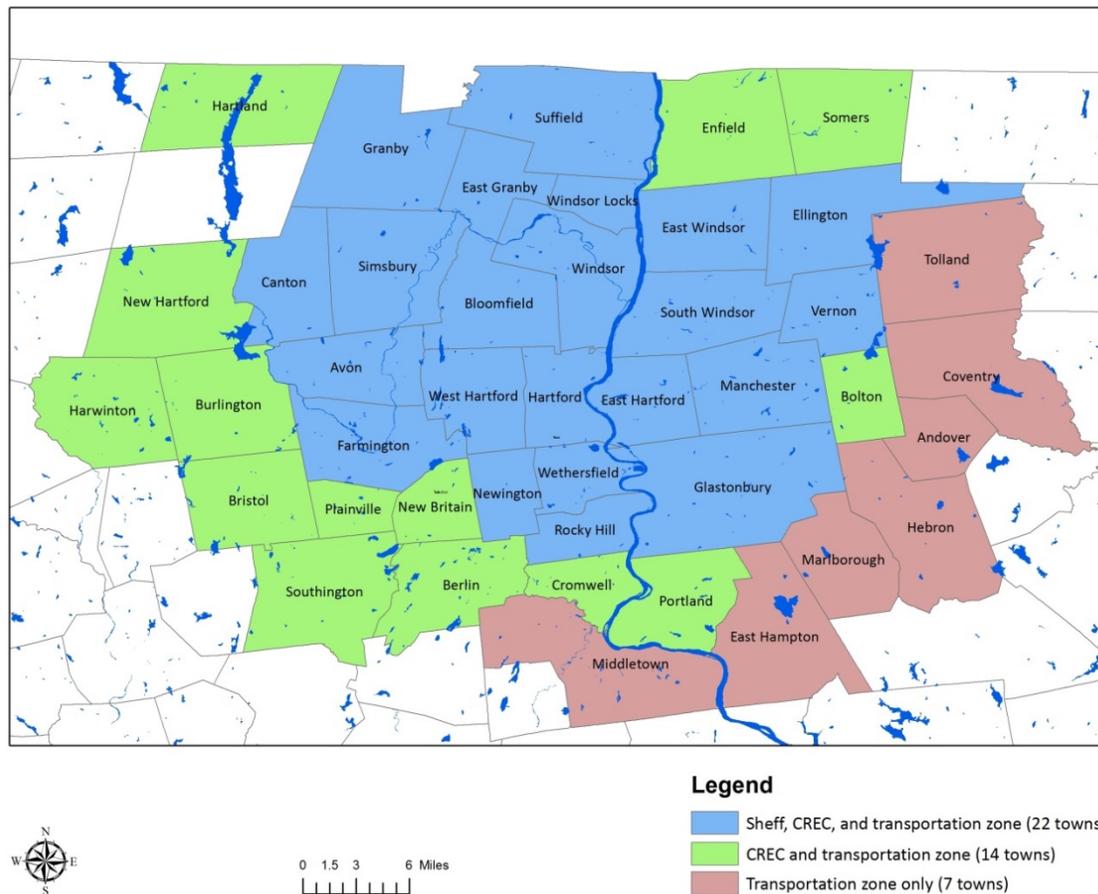
#### Interdistrict Magnet Schools in the Hartford Region

**Hartford region.** This study has predominantly focused on the *Sheff* region, defined as the 22 towns named within the *Sheff* agreements. However, these towns are not the only participants in the *Sheff* magnet system. Besides the *Sheff* town classification, there are two other regional classifications with substantial access to, and impact on, the reduced-isolation settings and efforts guiding the *Sheff* magnet system: towns where the CREC serves as the RESC; and, towns within a designated transportation zone.

The 22 *Sheff* towns are all served by CREC, which has 14 additional member towns besides the *Sheff* towns. (36 total CREC towns, shown in the blue and green combined in Figure

6-1, below). Adding the CREC towns to the *Sheff* region primarily expands the region to the south and west, but also stretches the region to the northeast somewhat. Finally, the transportation zone includes all 36 CREC towns and adds another seven towns along the southeast border of the expanded Hartford region. Taken all together, there are 43 towns in the transportation zone. Figure 6-1 shows the overlap of these three classifications.

**Figure 6-1. Map of the Hartford Region**



***Sheff* magnet schools.** There are 44 magnet schools operating in the expanded Hartford region, which are considered *Sheff* magnet schools. Of those, 42 are located in *Sheff* towns, while the other two are hosted within the transportation zone. Over half of the *Sheff* magnet schools (24) are located within the city of Hartford.

By student enrollment, 78 percent of students in *Sheff* magnet schools or the Open Choice program were residents of *Sheff* towns, as shown in Table 6-1. Another 19 percent of student enrollment in *Sheff* magnet schools came from residents outside the *Sheff* towns, but within the extended Hartford region transportation zone.

*Sheff magnet operators.* There are five operators of *Sheff* magnet schools. Two operators, Hartford Public Schools (20 schools) and CREC (18 schools), account for 86 percent of the schools and 92 percent of the overall 2013 *Sheff* magnet enrollment, as shown in Table 6-2. Goodwin College hosts three magnet schools, operated by the RESC LEARN, located in the town of East Hartford. Bloomfield (two) and East Hartford (one) each also host and operate *Sheff* magnet schools.

**Table 6-1. *Sheff* Magnet Participation by Region**

|  | # of Towns | # of Students | % of Students |
|--|------------|---------------|---------------|
| <i>Sheff</i> towns                                 | 22         | 12,666        | 78%           |
| Transportation zone, other than <i>Sheff</i> towns | 21         | 3,062         | 19%           |
| Other  | 44         | 433           | 3%            |
| Total  | 87         | 16,161        | 100%          |

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

**Table 6-2: Summary of *Sheff* Magnet Schools, by Operator**

| Operator                     | # of <i>Sheff</i> magnet schools located in Hartford (2015) | # of <i>Sheff</i> magnet schools located out of Hartford (2015) | Total # of <i>Sheff</i> magnets operated (2015) | # of students hosted in <i>Sheff</i> magnets (2013) |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Hartford Public Schools      | 19  | 1   | 20  | 8,006   |
| CREC                         | 5   | 13  | 18  | 6,789   |
| Goodwin College/LEARN        | 0   | 3   | 3   | 627   |
| Bloomfield Public Schools    | 0   | 2   | 2   | 541   |
| East Hartford Public Schools | 0   | 1   | 1   | 197   |
| Total                        | 24  | 20  | 44  | 16,160  |

Notes: The most current enrollment data is from 2013, which predates the number of schools data (2015)

Sources: PRI analysis of CSDE data

*CREC involvement with Sheff magnet schools.* While Hartford hosts the largest number of *Sheff* magnet schools, and students enrolled in the same, CREC is a close second in both categories. Statewide, CREC operates more magnet schools than all other RESCs combined. In 2013, CREC was the sixteenth largest school district in the state, behind only CTHSS for non-local or regional BoE districts. Enrollment in CREC schools surpasses total student enrollment for all *Sheff* towns except Hartford and West Hartford, and is essentially equal to East Hartford

It is clear that the role of CREC has expanded greatly in recent years because of and, perhaps, in parallel to the proliferation of *Sheff* magnets. Within state law and/or the state's attempts to comply with the *Sheff* agreements, different priorities and policies are applied to RESCs than to other magnet operators. For instance, operations are funded differently for RESCs than for municipal operators (as discussed in Chapter 3) and *Sheff* magnets are funded differently than other magnets in the state.

It may be that CREC has been treated no differently by state policy, but that CREC, as the RESC for the *Sheff* region, has been in the unique situation to pursue to the fullest the magnet school-related opportunities that have been authorized and promoted by the *Sheff* agreements. Ultimately, the reasons for CREC's growth, and its possible beneficial and/or detrimental consequences, were not the focus of this study.

### **Open Choice Placement**

Hartford resident students account for over 1,800 Open Choice placements, out of approximately 2,700 Open Choice placements statewide in 2013 (69 percent of all Open Choice enrollment). Hartford residents were placed in 27 different school districts.

In 2013, just over 130 students from 33 different towns were placed in Hartford Public Schools through the Open Choice program. Because of the proportion of and focus on Hartford resident students in both the Open Choice program and *Sheff* magnets, the application process, and therefore participation numbers, for both programs are often combined.

### ***Sheff* Region Magnet School and Open Choice Admissions Policies and Results**

As previously mentioned, RSCO provides information to prospective applicants on other choice programs in the Hartford area, including technical high schools and agri-science centers in the area, but does not administer the application or lottery process for programs besides magnet schools and Open Choice enrollment. As a result, RSCO has detailed data on magnet and Open Choice applicants, offers, and acceptance. While substantial discussion of these RSCO-administered placement policies and procedures is provided throughout this chapter, further study may be necessary to determine how these results and policies compare to other choice programs in the state, and any established best practices for choice school enrollment.

**Magnet school lottery protocols.** While RSCO, which is staffed by CSDE, administers the lottery process and placements, magnet operators must develop selection protocols to guide the selection process. Operators have a few options on how to pool students and are able to give preference to students with certain characteristics.

*Preference grouping.* Preference can be given to applicants who fit one or more of three criteria: 1) those applicants with a sibling already enrolled in the school, 2) those applicants with a parent or guardian as a staff member at the school, or 3) those currently enrolled in another magnet that has a "pathway" agreement with the magnet in question. It is left up to the operator to determine the precise order used to select students from these three preference groupings.

At present, nearly every magnet includes a preference for those with siblings enrolled in the school and those with a parent or guardian employed by the school. Not every operator or individual school has a pathway agreement. Pathway agreements are more likely when an operator and/or partner town are connected with multiple schools at varying grade levels. Even when pathway agreements are present, they are sometimes a lower preference grouping than either siblings or staff.

The order in which these groupings are applied varies between operators and between schools. In schools where all three preference groups are applied, there are instances of each of the three preferences being applied first, second, or third.

*Geographic pools.* At a minimum, applicants for Hartford-region magnet schools and Open Choice placements are grouped into two pools based on location – Hartford and non-Hartford residents (often referred to collectively as suburban residents). In some cases, a third pool, or set of pools, is created for students in towns identified as “partner towns.” Seats available to “partner towns” are often set aside per town, even when several partners are identified.

*Hartford resident pools.* Hartford resident students potentially have two additional types of geographic preference: neighborhood preference and zone preference. Magnet school operators can and have chosen to use either preference, neither, or both.

According to the RSCO Catalogue for 2015-2016, the neighborhood preference is for “students living within a half-mile (0.5) radius of specified schools.” This preference is only applied to schools hosted within the city of Hartford and is mostly, though not exclusively, included as a preference for Hartford-operated schools. However, only around half of the Hartford-operated magnets include this preference.

Hartford residents may also receive a zone preference, based on living in one of four regions within the city of Hartford. (Roughly, the zones are the northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast sections of Hartford.) As with neighborhood preference, zone preference is only used for about half of the Hartford-operated magnets. Unlike neighborhood preference, zone preference is used exclusively by Hartford-operated magnets. Hartford preference zones are also used for Hartford residents applying for a seat in a suburban district through Open Choice enrollment.

*Town participation rate.* When offering seats to the pool of suburban applicants, CSDE specifies that, within the preference groupings (i.e., sibling, staff, and pathways), seats are filled in inverse order to suburban town participation in all *Sheff* magnet schools and Open Choice placement. Functionally, all applicants, within the same preference and rank grouping (discussed below), from towns with less participation are offered placement before any student from a town with greater participation throughout the system is offered a seat. A town’s participation rate is based on enrollment in any magnet school, or through the Open Choice program, from the current school year.<sup>59</sup> Table 6-3 shows the top 25 towns by *Sheff* magnet school and Open Choice participation rate from October of 2013.

This suburban town-based offering system appears to have both merits and drawbacks, which will affect different groups of students in different ways. Basing the rate on actual enrollment in the magnet programs, versus on overall town size, may help to ensure that the goal of reducing isolation is being applied between suburban towns, instead of just between suburban towns and Hartford. That is, by giving preference to students from towns with lower participation rates, those students have a better chance of being offered a placement than if no such town-based preference existed.

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<sup>59</sup> Applications from February 2016 will be considered based on October 2015 enrollment levels.

Though overall enrollment has increased, relative town participation rates have been steady from October 2007 to October 2013. All towns have seen the number of students attending *Sheff* magnet schools increase during this time period, with a median increase of over 105 students per suburban town. During this time, Bloomfield saw the greatest change in participation rate ranking, from being second behind East Hartford among non-Hartford towns in 2007 to being fourth, behind East Hartford, Manchester, and (slightly behind) Windsor.

*Rank of school by applicant.* Application forms for magnet schools and Open Choice placements give applicants the opportunity to rank up to five schools for possible placement. However, the one uniform placement option exercised by every magnet operator was to consider and offer placement to all applicants who ranked a school first before giving any consideration to applicants who ranked a school second through fifth, or those who opted into “all magnet consideration.”<sup>60</sup> This protocol decision, combined with first-choice demand in most schools well exceeding available seats, has led to a situation where few applicants are considered for the schools they rank other than their first choice.

**Table 6-3. Towns with greater than 100 students enrolled in *Sheff* Magnet or Open Choice (2013)**

| Participant Rank   | Resident Town | % of participation | Regional Status     |
|--|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1  | Hartford      | 45.9%              | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 2  | East Hartford | 7.2%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 3  | New Britain   | 6.0%               | Transportation Zone |
| 4  | Manchester    | 4.5%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 5  | Windsor       | 3.3%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 6  | Bloomfield    | 3.2%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 7  | West Hartford | 2.6%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 8  | Enfield       | 2.1%               | Transportation Zone |
| 9  | Vernon        | 1.9%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 10   | Glastonbury   | 1.6%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 11   | Middletown    | 1.6%               | Transportation Zone |
| 12   | Bristol       | 1.5%               | Transportation Zone |
| 13   | Wethersfield  | 1.5%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 14   | South Windsor | 1.2%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 15   | Newington     | 1.1%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 16   | Rocky Hill    | 1.0%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 17   | Southington   | 0.8%               | Transportation Zone |
| 18   | Simsbury      | 0.8%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 19   | East Windsor  | 0.8%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 20   | Berlin        | 0.7%               | Transportation Zone |
| 21   | Windsor Locks | 0.7%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 22   | Ellington     | 0.6%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 24   | East Hampton  | 0.6%               | Transportation Zone |
| 23   | Farmington    | 0.6%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| 25   | Avon          | 0.6%               | <i>Sheff</i> Town   |
| (All others = 61 towns, combined for 7.5% of enrollment) |               |                    |                     |

Note: While included in this table for informational purposes, there is no distinction made by “regional status” (i.e., between *Sheff* towns, towns in the transportation zone, or towns outside the transportation zone) in the lottery system.

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

<sup>60</sup> The first choice ranking applies within the major geographic pools – that is, a school may end up offering a seat to a second choice student from a suburb, but not have enough seats available for all first choice Hartford residents, or vice versa.

**2015 RSCO Applicants.** Overall, nearly 18,800 applications were submitted for seats in the Hartford region magnet system for the 2015-2016 school year. There were twice as many suburban applicants (12,600) as Hartford applicants (6,200). Over 7,100 applicants were offered seats (38 percent of applicants), with approximately 5,200 accepting those placements (73 percent of offers, or 28 percent of applicants).

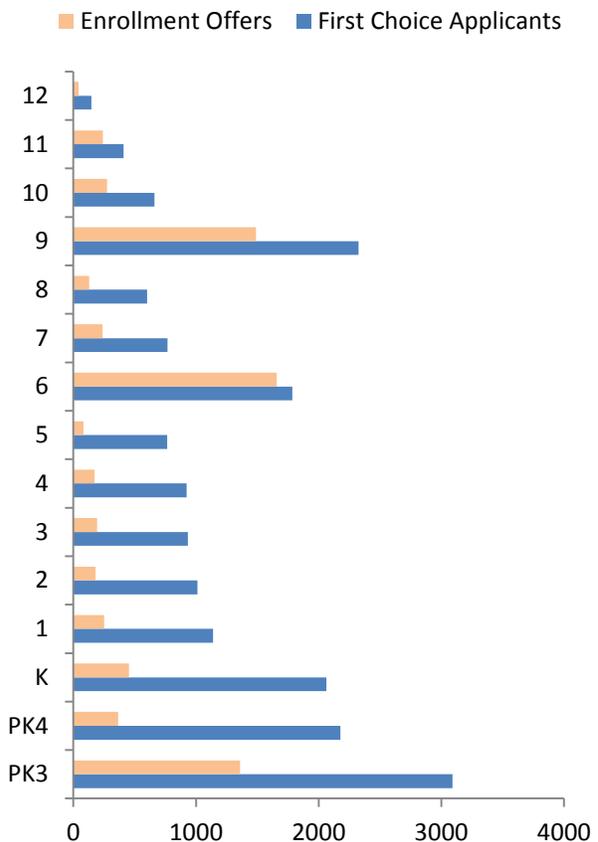
Applicants had a 38 percent chance of receiving an offer at their first choice school based on system wide data. However, application and offer rates were not symmetrical across the system. Applicants from Hartford had a 44 percent chance of receiving a first-choice offer, while suburban applicants had a 35 percent chance.

The first choice offer rate also varied considerably between grade levels. Applicants for 5th grade had a 10 percent chance of getting an offer to their first choice school, while 6th grade applicants had an almost 93 percent chance of placement, with much variation in all other grade levels.

Applications were highest for seats at school entry levels, such as both preschool grades (PK3 and PK4), 9th grade, and 6th grade, as shown in Figure 6-2. Applications for kindergarten seats were also relatively high, but fewer kindergarten seats were available because every elementary magnet school in the region offers PK4, PK3, or both.

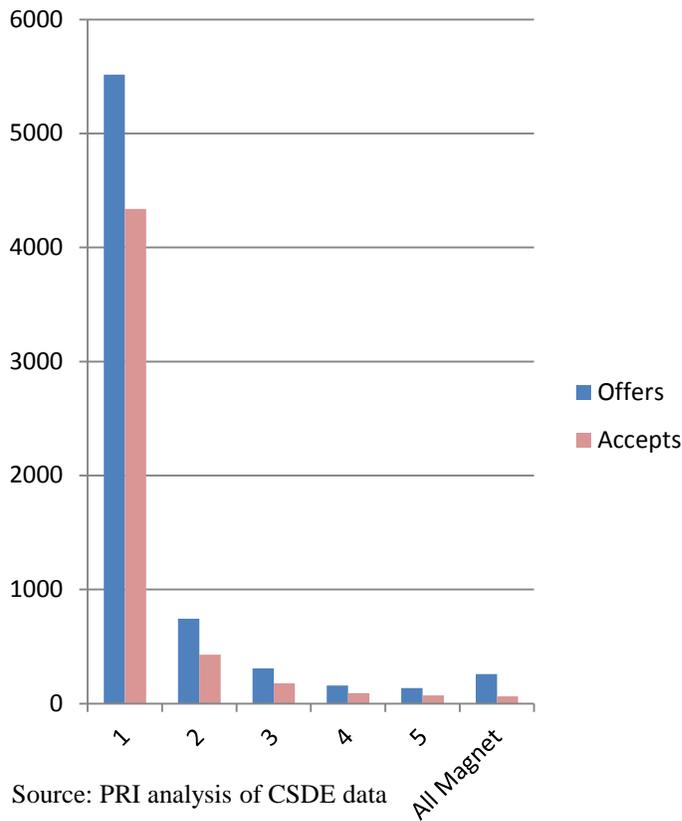
*Offers to applicants by school rank.* As discussed earlier, applicants have the opportunity to rank up to five different schools they are interested in attending. Applicants can also choose to be considered for all magnet schools. Offer and acceptance rates were significantly lower for all choices after first choices, as shown in Figure 6-3. Offers were made to 5,515 first choice applicants, 4,339 of whom accepted this placement (79 percent acceptance rate). First choice applicants accounted for over three quarters of all offers (77 percent of offers) and 84 percent of all accepted placements. Put another way, only 16 percent of placements were made with applicants other than those who had identified the school of enrollment as their first choice.

**Figure 6-2. Applicants Versus Offers by Grade Level (2015)**



Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

**Figure 6-3. Offers and Placement Accepts by Rank (2015)**



Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

The number of offers given to applicants declined by the choice rank given to a school by the applicant, except more offers were given to those selecting the “all magnet” placement option than either fourth or fifth choices. Acceptance rates for placements drop off considerably from first choice applicants (79 percent) to second choice applicants (58 percent), but these rates remained in the 50 to 60 percent range for third through fifth choice applicants. Fewer than one quarter of offers made to applicants through the “all magnet” option were accepted (24 percent).

Looking at offers and placements by choice, it is clear that a student’s chances for placement, while still relatively low, are much greater for an applicant’s first ranked choice than for any other choice. As mentioned earlier, further study of the lottery system might determine if the lottery in the Hartford region achieves the desired outcomes.

**Racial composition limitations and challenges.** Admission to Hartford region magnet schools is relatively complicated. Besides meeting the statewide standard that admission be limited to 75 percent of students coming from a single town, magnet schools in the Hartford region must meet the terms of the *Sheff* agreement in order to be considered a reduced-isolation setting, and therefore part of the compliance calculation.

As discussed in Chapter 1, a *Sheff* magnet school with black or Hispanic enrollment greater than 75 percent may not count towards compliance with the *Sheff* agreement, as the school would no longer be defined as a reduced-isolation setting. Some provisions are made for schools in the 75 to 80 percent range, but schools with black and Hispanic enrollment over 80 percent are unlikely to count towards fulfilling the *Sheff* agreement goals.

A newer requirement, listed in the Phase III extension (2013), is that at least half of the incoming class enrollment in a RESC-operated *Sheff* magnet school must be Hartford resident students, with some exceptions. This requirement is typically waived for magnet schools with existing partnership agreements with towns.

Examining the various enrollment requirements together can be illustrative of some of the challenges of admitting the appropriate mix of students in order to achieve the desired racial composition of each school. Consider the following hypothetical:

*A RESC-operated Sheff magnet school is enrolling students and is adhering to the 50 percent Hartford resident student enrollment requirement for incoming classes (as adopted in the Phase III extension). Over 90 percent of students from Hartford are black or Hispanic. This effectively means that between 45 and 50 percent of a magnet school’s enrollment will be black or Hispanic before any students are enrolled from towns outside of Hartford, if Hartford resident students are limited to, or very near, the 50 percent threshold.*

In order to comply with the overall limit (75 percent) on the proportion of black or Hispanic students in *Sheff* magnet schools, a school is faced with needing at least half of the suburban enrollment to be non-black and non-Hispanic. In Chapter 4, it was established that just under 30 percent of the student population in the *Sheff* region, but outside of Hartford, identified as being black or Hispanic. If non-Hartford applicants were racially representative of that region, we would expect our hypothetical school to have enrollment such that black and Hispanic students made up approximately 60 to 65 percent of the enrollment, well under the 75 percent threshold for a reduced isolation school.

However, suburban applicants are not racially representative of the region. In 2015, over 48 percent of suburban applicants were black or Hispanic. A comprehensive review of 2013 lottery applicants for Hartford-region magnet schools and Open Choice seats found suburban students were much likelier to apply for and attend a magnet school if they were low-income, black, or Hispanic than if they were white.<sup>61</sup> The same study also found that students in suburban districts with more than 60 percent minority enrollment were more likely to apply for magnet and Open Choice seats. Using a revised expectation of suburban applicant racial percentage, our hypothetical magnet school is starting off with likely enrollment that looks to be near the 75 percent reduced-isolation threshold.

**Table 6-4. 2013 Resident Student Racial Composition**

| Town          | % black or Hispanic |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Bloomfield    | 91.4%               |
| Hartford      | 91.2%               |
| East Hartford | 76.4%               |
| New Britain   | 73.6%               |
| Windsor       | 63.2%               |
| Manchester    | 47.1%               |

Source: PRI analysis of CSDE data

As discussed previously, basing offers on town participation rates may contribute to achieving and maintaining the racial composition of students necessary to meet reduced-isolation goals. The non-Hartford towns with the greatest number of students in *Sheff* magnet schools, East Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, Windsor, and Bloomfield, also happen to be the towns with relatively high percentages of black or Hispanic resident students. Table 6-4 shows the percentage of black or Hispanic resident students from these the top *Sheff* participant towns.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Jack Dougherty, Diane Zannoni, et al., “Who Chooses in the Hartford Region? Report 2: A Statistical Analysis of Regional School Choice Office Applicants and Non-Applicants among Hartford and Suburban-Resident Students in the Spring 2013 Lottery” (Hartford, CT: Cities Suburbs Schools Project at Trinity College, October 17, 2015), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/).

<sup>62</sup> The remaining *Sheff* towns had 26 percent or fewer black or Hispanic resident students.

In practice, this policy places some limit on the number of students offered seats from high-minority towns, which, in turn limits the number of non-Hartford minority students offered seats. Without this policy, or another similar to it, it may prove more difficult for schools to maintain a racial composition of fewer than 75 percent minority students.

**School-specific differences from system-wide data.** Despite the figures shown above, it is important to understand that system-wide characteristics, demand, and availability of seats are not always indicative of interest in specific schools. Geography, or more specifically in this context, travel time, may place a ceiling on interest in certain seats. As a result, lottery programs for Hartford region magnet schools may face major challenges that will not show up in system-wide analysis.

For example, schools may face one of the two following scenarios (among others): 1) enrolling enough non-black, non-Hispanic students in schools hosted within Hartford city limits and 2) enrolling enough Hartford students, regardless of race, at magnet schools hosted outside of Hartford, especially in locations that are non-contiguous to the city of Hartford. In the first scenario, there are not enough interested suburban students. In the second scenario, there are not enough interested Hartford students. At the school level, both schools are having trouble meeting the requirements and goals of the magnet system. But looking at system-wide data, these two issues may appear to cancel each other out to some degree.

## Appendices



Appendix A. List of Public School Choice Schools in Connecticut: School Year  
2015-2016

| <b>Table 1A. Interdistrict Magnet Schools Operated By Local Districts: 55</b> |  |  |                                     |  |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>#</b>  | <b>Operator<br/>(Local<br/>District)</b> | <b>School Name</b>   | <b>Location</b>                     | <b>Year<br/>Magnet<br/>School<br/>Began<br/>Operations</b> |
|   |  | <b>Bloomfield (2)</b>  |                                     |  |
| 1   | Bloomfield                               | Wintonbury Magnet School                                       | Bloomfield                          | 2009   |
| 2   | Bloomfield                               | Global Experience School                                       | Bloomfield                          | 2005   |
|   |  | <b>Bridgeport (4)</b>  |                                     |  |
| 1   | Bridgeport                               | Discovery Magnet School  | Bridgeport                          | 2010   |
| 2   | Bridgeport                               | Zoological Science, Research & Biotech High School             | Bridgeport                          | 2013   |
| 3   | Bridgeport                               | Physical Science, Engineering, and Aero-Hydrospace High School | Bridgeport                          | 2013   |
| 4   | Bridgeport                               | Info Tech and Software Engineering High School                 | Bridgeport                          | 2013   |
|   |  | <b>Danbury (1)</b>   |                                     |  |
| 1   | Danbury                                  | Western CT Academy of International Studies                    | Danbury                             | 2006   |
|   |  | <b>East Hartford (1)</b>                                       |                                     |  |
| 1   | East Hartford                            | CT International Baccalaureate Academy                         | East Hartford                       | 1999   |
|   |  | <b>Hartford (20)</b>   |                                     |  |
| 1   | Hartford                                 | Mary M. Hooker Environmental Studies                           | Hartford                            | 2006   |
| 2   | Hartford                                 | Kinsella Arts Magnet   | Hartford                            | 2006   |
| 3   | Hartford                                 | Noah Webster MicroSociety Magnet                               | Hartford                            | 2004   |
| 4   | Hartford                                 | STEM Magnet at Annie Fisher                                    | Hartford                            | 2010   |
| 5   | Hartford                                 | Breakthrough Magnet  | Hartford                            | 2002   |
| 6   | Hartford                                 | Montessori Magnet at Annie Fisher                              | Hartford                            | 2009   |
| 7   | Hartford                                 | Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy                        | Hartford                            | 2002   |
| 8   | Hartford                                 | Classical Magnet   | Hartford                            | 2003   |
| 9   | Hartford                                 | Sport and Medical Sciences Academy                             | Hartford                            | 2002   |
| 10  | Hartford                                 | Pathways to Technology   | Hartford                            | 2003   |
| 11  | Hartford                                 | University High School for Science and Engineering             | Hartford                            | 2004   |
| 12  | Hartford                                 | Capital Community College Senior Academy                       | Hartford                            | 2014   |
| 13  | Hartford                                 | Capital Preparatory Magnet School                              | Hartford                            | 2005   |
| 14  | Hartford                                 | Betances STEM  | Hartford                            | 2012   |
| 15  | Hartford                                 | Betances Early Reading   | Hartford                            | 2014   |
| 16  | Hartford                                 | Breakthrough II  | Hartford                            | 2012   |
| 17  | Hartford<br>(located in<br>Manchester)   | Great Path Academy at MCC                                      | Hartford (located<br>in Manchester) | 2002   |
| 18  | Hartford                                 | Hartford Pre-Kindergarten Magnet                               | Hartford                            | 2013   |
| 19  | Hartford                                 | Montessori Magnet at Moylan                                    | Hartford                            | 2013   |
| 20  | Hartford                                 | Journalism and Media Academy                                   | Hartford                            | 2013   |
|   |  | <b>New Haven (17)</b>  |                                     |  |
| 1   | New Haven                                | Barnard Environmental Magnet                                   | New Haven                           | 2004   |
| 2   | New Haven                                | Beecher Museum Magnet  | New Haven                           | 2008   |
| 3   | New Haven                                | Davis 21st Century Elementary                                  | New Haven                           | 2001   |
| 4   | New Haven                                | Ross-Woodward Magnet   | New Haven                           | 2008   |
| 5   | New Haven                                | John C. Daniels Magnet   | New Haven                           | 2008   |
| 6   | New Haven                                | Engineering and Science University Magnet (Hamden)             | New Haven/<br>Hamden                | 2008   |

Appendix A. List of Public School Choice Schools in Connecticut: School Year  
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| <b>Table 1A. Interdistrict Magnet Schools Operated By Local Districts: 55</b> |  |   |                           |  |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|--|
| <b>#</b>  | <b>Operator<br/>(Local<br/>District)</b> | <b>School Name</b>  | <b>Location</b>           | <b>Year<br/>Magnet<br/>School<br/>Began<br/>Operations</b> |
| 7   | New Haven                                | Jepson Nongraded  | New Haven                 | 1996   |
| 8   | New Haven                                | Mauro-Sheridan Magnet   | New Haven                 | 2003   |
| 9   | New Haven                                | King/Robinson Magnet  | New Haven                 | 2004   |
| 10  | New Haven                                | West Rock Author's Academy (formerly MicroSociety)            | New Haven                 | 2003   |
| 11  | New Haven                                | Betsy Ross Arts Middle  | New Haven                 | 1999   |
| 12  | New Haven                                | Metropolitan Business High School                             | New Haven                 | 2003   |
| 13  | New Haven                                | Hill Regional Career High School                              | New Haven                 | 1997   |
| 14  | New Haven                                | Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School                   | New Haven                 | 1996   |
| 15  | New Haven                                | High School in Community                                      | New Haven                 | 1995   |
| 16  | New Haven                                | Hyde Leadership High School                                   | New Haven/<br>North Haven | 1998   |
| 17  | New Haven                                | New Haven Academy   | New Haven                 | 2003   |
|   |  | <b>New London (3)</b>   |                           |  |
| 1   | New London                               | Science & Technology Magnet High School of<br>Southeastern CT | New London                | 2005   |
| 2   | New London                               | Winthrop  | New London                | 2012   |
| 3   | New London                               | Nathan Hale   | New London                | 2013   |
|   |  | <b>Norwalk (1)</b>  |                           |  |
| 1   | Norwalk                                  | Center for Global Studies                                     | Norwalk                   | 1995   |
|   |  | <b>Stamford (2)</b>   |                           |  |
| 1   | Stamford                                 | Rogers International Magnet School                            | Stamford                  | 2009   |
| 2   | Stamford                                 | Academy of Information Technology                             | Stamford                  | 2004   |
|   |  | <b>Waterbury (3)</b>  |                           |  |
| 1   | Waterbury                                | Maloney Interdistrict Magnet                                  | Waterbury                 | 1996   |
| 2   | Waterbury                                | Rotella Interdistrict Magnet                                  | Waterbury                 | 2001   |
| 3   | Waterbury                                | Waterbury Arts Magnet School                                  | Waterbury                 | 2004   |
|   |  | <b>Windham (1)</b>  |                           |  |
| 1   | Windham                                  | Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy                               | Windham                   | 2013   |

| <b>Table 1B. Interdistrict Magnet Schools Operated By RESCs: 33</b> |                            |                                    |                 |  |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>#</b>  | <b>Operator<br/>(RESC)</b> | <b>School Name</b>                 | <b>Location</b> | <b>Year<br/>Magnet<br/>School<br/>Began<br/>Operations</b> |
|   |                            | <b>ACES (3)</b>                    |                 |  |
| 1   | ACES                       | Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet   | Hamden          | 1998   |
| 2   | ACES                       | Thomas Edison Middle School        | Meriden         | 2001   |
| 3   | ACES                       | ACES Education Center for the Arts | New Haven       | 1993   |
|   |                            | <b>CES (2)</b>                     |                 |  |
| 1   | CES                        | Six to Six Interdistrict Magnet    | Bridgeport      | 1994   |
| 2   | CES                        | Regional Center for the Arts       | Trumbull        | 1996   |
|   |                            | <b>CREC (18)</b>                   |                 |  |

Appendix A. List of Public School Choice Schools in Connecticut: School Year  
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| <b>Table 1B. Interdistrict Magnet Schools Operated By RESCs: 33</b> |                        |  |                 |  |
|---|------------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| <b>#</b>  | <b>Operator (RESC)</b> | <b>School Name</b>   | <b>Location</b> | <b>Year Magnet School Began Operations</b> |
| 1   | CREC                   | Glastonbury/East Hartford Elementary Magnet                | Glastonbury     | 1992                                       |
| 2   | CREC                   | University of Hartford Magnet (UHart)                      | Hartford        | 2001                                       |
| 3   | CREC                   | Reggio Magnet School of the Arts                           | Avon            | 2008                                       |
| 4   | CREC                   | International Magnet School for Global Citizenship         | East Hartford   | 2008                                       |
| 5   | CREC                   | Museum Academy   | Bloomfield      | 2010                                       |
| 6   | CREC                   | Montessori Magnet School                                   | Hartford        | 2000                                       |
| 7   | CREC                   | Two Rivers Magnet Middle                                   | East Hartford   | 2002                                       |
| 8   | CREC                   | Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science               | Hartford        | 2000                                       |
| 9   | CREC                   | Academy of Aerospace and Engineering                       | Rocky Hill      | 2000                                       |
| 10  | CREC                   | Academy of Aerospace and Engineering                       | Windsor         | 2000                                       |
| 11  | CREC                   | Public Safety Academy Magnet School                        | Enfield         | 2008                                       |
| 12  | CREC                   | Metropolitan Learning Center                               | Bloomfield      | 1998                                       |
| 13  | CREC                   | Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Middle School         | Hartford        | 1989                                       |
| 14  | CREC                   | Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts High School           | Hartford        | 1989                                       |
| 15  | CREC                   | Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy        | Windsor         | 2010                                       |
| 16  | CREC                   | Discovery Academy  | Hartford        | 2010                                       |
| 17  | CREC                   | Anna Grace Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Elementary | Hartford        | 2012                                       |
| 18  | CREC                   | Two Rivers Magnet High School                              | East Hartford   | 2012                                       |
|   |                        | <b>LEARN (5)</b>   |                 |  |
| 1   | LEARN                  | Regional Multicultural Magnet                              | New London      | 1992                                       |
| 2   | LEARN                  | The Friendship School                                      | Waterford       | 2005                                       |
| 3   | LEARN                  | Dual Language Arts Academy                                 | New London      | 2007                                       |
| 4   | LEARN                  | Marine Science Magnet High School of SE CT                 | Groton          | 2011                                       |
| 5   | LEARN                  | Three Rivers Middle College Magnet                         | Norwich         | 2012                                       |
|   |                        | <b>EASTCONN (2)</b>  |                 |  |
| 1   | EASTCONN               | Arts at the Capitol Theater                                | Windham         | 2003                                       |
| 2   | EASTCONN               | Quinebaug Valley Middle College High School - Danielson    | Killingly       | 2008                                       |
|   |                        | <b>Goodwin (3)</b>   |                 |  |
| 1   | Goodwin                | Early Childhood Magnet                                     | East Hartford   | 2013                                       |
| 2   | Goodwin                | Connecticut River Academy                                  | East Hartford   | 2010                                       |
| 3   | Goodwin                | Senior Academy College                                     | East Hartford   | 2014                                       |

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| <b>Table 2. Charter Schools: 24 (23 run by state; 1 run by local district)</b> |                 |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>#</b>   | <b>Operator</b> | <b>School Name</b>                                     | <b>Location</b> |
| 1  | New Haven       | Elm City Montessori School (Local Charter School)      | New Haven       |
| 2  | State           | Achievement First Bridgeport Academy                   | Bridgeport      |
| 3  | State           | Achievement First Hartford Academy                     | Hartford        |
| 4  | State           | Amistad Academy E & M & HS                             | New Haven       |
| 5  | State           | Booker T. Washington Academy                           | New Haven       |
| 6  | State           | Brass City Charter School                              | Waterbury       |
| 7  | State           | The Bridge Academy                                     | Bridgeport      |
| 8  | State           | Common Ground High School                              | New Haven       |
| 9  | State           | Elm City College Preparatory E &M                      | New Haven       |
| 10   | State           | Explorations Charter School                            | Winsted         |
| 11   | State           | Great Oaks Charter School                              | Bridgeport      |
| 12   | State           | Highville Charter School, Inc.                         | New Haven       |
| 13   | State           | Integrated Day Charter School                          | Norwich         |
| 14   | State           | ISAAC Interdistrict School for Arts and Communications | New London      |
| 15   | State           | Jumoke Academy (3 locations)                           | Hartford        |
| 16   | State           | New Beginnings Family Academy                          | Bridgeport      |
| 17   | State           | Odyssey Community School                               | Manchester      |
| 18   | State           | Park City Prep Charter School                          | Bridgeport      |
| 19   | State           | Path Academy   | Windham         |
| 20   | State           | Side by Side Charter School                            | Norwalk         |
| 21   | State           | Stamford Academy                                       | Stamford        |
| 22   | State           | Trailblazers Academy                                   | Stamford        |
| 23   | State           | Capital Prep Harbor                                    | Bridgeport      |
| 24   | State           | Stamford Charter School for Excl.                      | Stamford        |

| <b>Table 3. Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Centers: 19</b> |   |                 |
|--|---|-----------------|
| <b>#</b>   | <b>School Name</b>  | <b>Location</b> |
| 1  | Bloomfield High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center              | Bloomfield      |
| 2  | Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Center                           | Bridgeport      |
| 3  | Ellis Clark Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center                         | Woodbury        |
| 4  | Glastonbury High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center             | Glastonbury     |
| 5  | Housatonic Valley Regional High Agricultural Science and Technology Center              | Falls Village   |
| 6  | Killingly High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center               | Dayville        |
| 7  | Ledyard High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center                 | Ledyard         |
| 8  | Lyman Hall High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center              | Wallingford     |
| 9  | Lyman Memorial High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center          | Lebanon         |
| 10   | Middletown High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center              | Middletown      |
| 11   | New Haven Regional Aquaculture/Agricultural Science and Technology Center, Sound School | New Haven       |
| 12   | Northwestern Regional High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center   | Winsted         |

Appendix A. List of Public School Choice Schools in Connecticut: School Year  
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| <b>Table 3. Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Centers: 19</b> |   |                 |
|--|---|-----------------|
| <b>#</b>   | <b>School Name</b>  | <b>Location</b> |
| 13   | Rockville High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center       | Rockville       |
| 14   | E.O. Smith High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center      | Storrs          |
| 15   | Southington High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center     | Southington     |
| 16   | Suffield High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center        | Suffield        |
| 17   | Trumbull High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center        | Trumbull        |
| 18   | Stamford Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center                    | Stamford        |
| 19   | Wamago Regional High School Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Center | Litchfield      |

| <b>Table 4. Technical High Schools: 20</b> |                 |   |                 |
|--|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| <b>#</b>                                   | <b>Operator</b> | <b>School Name</b>                        | <b>Location</b> |
| 1  | State           | Abbott Technical High School              | Danbury         |
| 2  | State           | Bristol Technical Education Center        | Bristol         |
| 3  | State           | Bullard-Havens Technical High School      | Bridgeport      |
| 4  | State           | Cheney Technical High School              | Manchester      |
| 5  | State           | CT Aero Tech                              | Hartford        |
| 6  | State           | Ellis Technical High School               | Danielson       |
| 7  | State           | Goodwin Technical High School             | New Britain     |
| 8  | State           | Grasso Technical High School              | Groton          |
| 9  | State           | Kaynor Technical High School              | Waterbury       |
| 10   | State           | Norwich Technical High School             | Norwich         |
| 11   | State           | O'Brien Technical High School             | Ansonia         |
| 12   | State           | Platt Technical High School               | Milford         |
| 13   | State           | Prince Technical High School              | Hartford        |
| 14   | State           | Stratford School for Aviation Maintenance | Stratford       |
| 15   | State           | Vinal Technical High School               | Middletown      |
| 16   | State           | Whitney Technical High School             | Hamden          |
| 17   | State           | Wilcox Technical High School              | Meriden         |
| 18   | State           | Windham Technical High School             | Willimantic     |
| 19   | State           | Wolcott Technical High School             | Torrington      |
| 20   | State           | Wright Technical High School              | Stamford        |