

# Hartford Region Public School Choice Programs

Program Review and Investigations Committee

Staff Report

April 13, 2016

# Study Focus

- Describe public school choice programs in the Hartford region, with an emphasis on interdistrict magnet schools
- Discuss the 1996 *Sheff v. O'Neill* decision by the Connecticut Supreme Court

# School Choice Outline

- 1) Choice schools overview
- 2) Choice school types
  - a. Interdistrict magnet schools
  - b. Technical high schools
  - c. Charter schools
  - d. Agri-science centers
  - e. Open Choice enrollment
- 3) Choice schools in the Hartford region
- 4) *Sheff v. O'Neill*

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# Choice School Programs

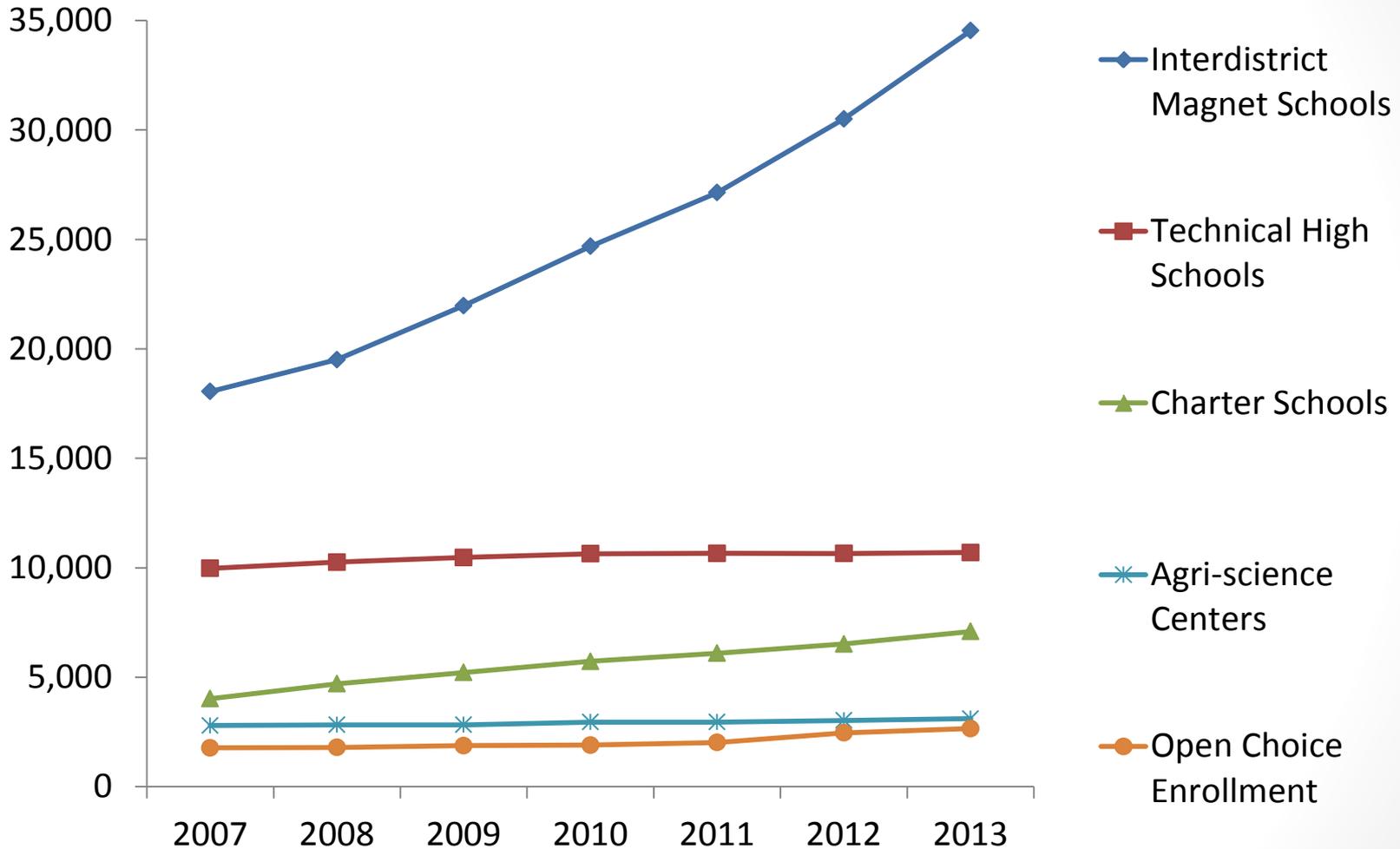
| Type of Choice School               | State                      |                              |   |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|
|                                     | Number of School<br>(2015) | Number of Students<br>(2013) | % of Choice School Enrollment<br>(2013) |
| <b>Interdistrict Magnet Schools</b> | 88                         | 34,541                       | 59%                                     |
| <b>Technical High Schools</b>       | 20                         | 10,698                       | 18%                                     |
| <b>Charter Schools</b>              | 24                         | 7,093                        | 12%                                     |
| <b>Agri-science Centers</b>         | 19                         | 3,108                        | 5%                                      |
| <b>Open Choice Enrollment</b>       | N/A                        | 2,657                        | 5%                                      |
| <b>Total Choice School Program</b>  | 151                        | 58,097                       | 100%                                    |

**Source: CSDE data**

# Choice School Programs

- Each choice program has different purpose or role
  - Sometimes overlapping
- Most choice programs rely on multi-town enrollment
  - Except some charter schools
- State funding available for choice programs
  - Most programs eligible for a specific choice grant

# Statewide Enrollment Trends for All School Choice Programs: (2007 – 2013)



Source: CSDE data

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# Interdistrict Magnet Schools

- Designed to support racial, ethnic, and economic diversity
  - Enroll students from multiple towns
- Operated by:
  - Local or regional BOEs
  - Regional educational service center (RESA)
  - Other non-profit

# Interdistrict Magnet Schools

## Funding:

- Based on operator, location, and enrollment levels
- 1) Magnets grants of \$3,000 to \$13,054 per pupil (FY 2016)
- 2) Tuition from sending district
  - Sometimes
- 3) Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding
  - Town-based get ECS for their own resident students
  - Sending towns keep ECS for their resident students
  - RESC operators do not get ECS

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# Technical High Schools

- Second largest number of choice school students
- 20 schools, regionally located
- Completely state run and funded
  - The Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS)
- Admission is achievement based

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# Charter Schools

- Educating certain segments of student population
  - Student characteristics
    - single gender, special education, indicators of low-income, history of low academic performance or behavioral difficulties
  - Districts or town characteristics
    - districts with a history of substandard academic performance
- Overlap with magnet school purpose
  - But less emphasis on reducing isolation

# Charter Schools

- Operated by different entities
  - Governance is independent of state or local BOE
- State or local charter schools
  - Most are state charter schools (23)
    - \$11,000 per pupil grant from state
  - One local charter school
    - comes from the local district that granted the charter

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# Agri-science Centers

- Agricultural Science and Technology Education Centers
- Operated by local or regional BOE
- Every district must either:
  - Host an agri-science center
  - Designate a center for their students
- Achievement based-enrollment

# Agri-science Centers

## Funding:

- 1) Grant of \$3,200 per pupil (regardless of residence)
  - based on prior year enrollment
  - opportunities for some increase
- 2) Tuition for out-of-district
  - \$6,822 max per pupil (FY 16)
- 3) ECS for in-district students
  - sending district keeps ECS for their residents

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# Open Choice Enrollment

- Allows students to attend schools in districts outside of their own town
- No specific school
  - Students are regular part of receiving district's school system
- Limited to Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, and New London
  - To or from those cities
- Districts make seats available voluntarily

# Open Choice Enrollment

## Funding

- ECS split between sending and receiving districts
- State grants to host district
  - \$3,000 to \$8,000 per pupil
  - Based on percentage of receiving district enrollment

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# Hartford Region Magnet Operators

| <b>Operator</b>                     | <b>Total # of Hartford region magnets operated(2015)</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Hartford Public Schools</b>      | 20   |
| <b>CREC</b>                         | 18   |
| <b>Goodwin College/LEARN</b>        | 3  |
| <b>Bloomfield Public Schools</b>    | 2  |
| <b>East Hartford Public Schools</b> | 1  |
| <b>Total</b>                        | 44   |

# Hartford Region Magnets and Open Choice

- Magnet schools more prominent in Hartford region
  - Half of all magnets are in Hartford region
  - Almost half of overall magnet enrollment in Hartford region magnets
- Open Choice enrollment
  - Almost 70% of Open Choice seats are Hartford resident students
- Demand well exceeds available seats

# Hartford Region Magnet Lottery

## 2015 Magnet Lottery Information:

- Nearly 18,800 applicants
  - 12,600 non-Hartford applicants
  - 6,200 Hartford applicants
- Over 7,100 offered seats
  - 38% of applicants
- Approximately 5,200 accepted placements
  - 73% of offers
  - 28% of applicants

# Hartford Region Lottery

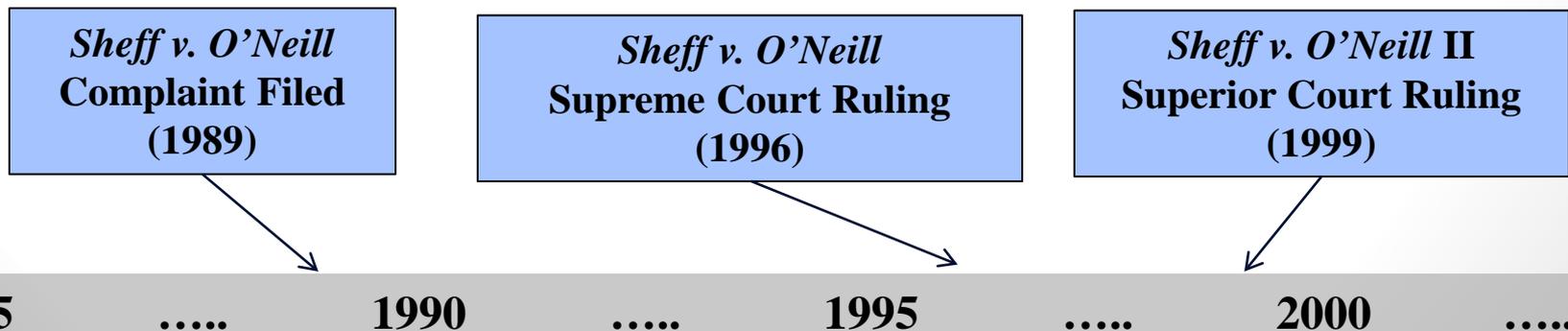
- One application for all Hartford Magnets and Open Choice
  - Regional School Choice Office (RSCO)
  
- Lottery is designed to balance:
  - State law
  - Demographics of demand
  - *Sheff* agreements

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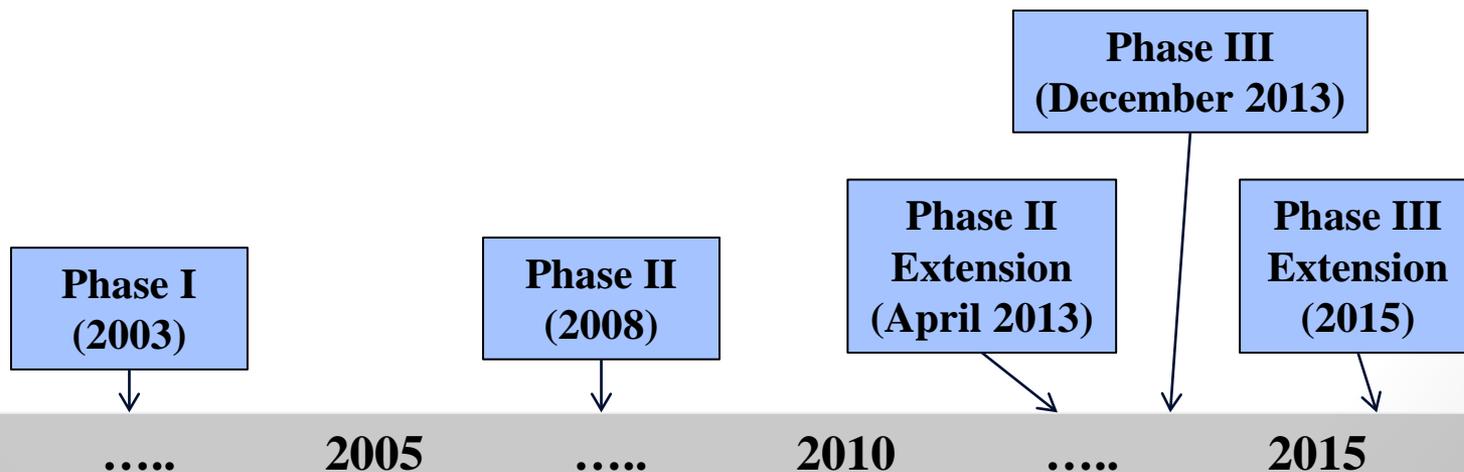
# *Sheff v. O'Neill* (1996)

- Racial, ethnic, and economic isolation
  - Hartford region students
- State set up town-based school districts
- No specific judicial remedy



# Sheff Agreements

- Reduced-isolation setting
  - <75% minority enrollment in the school
  - <75% black or Hispanic as of Phase III
- First goal in Phase I
- One year agreements since 2013-2014 school year



# Sheff Agreements

## Sheff Compliance:

- Goal counts all minority Hartford resident students in reduced-isolation settings
- 2015 goal:
  - 47.5% in reduced-isolation settings
  - missed in 2015 (45.5%)
- Progress from ~10% in 2003
  - Met goal in 5 of last 8 years
- Phase IV is overdue
  - August 1, 2015

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