

On March 21, 2022, a 10-year agreement was officially finalized in the *Sheff v. O'Neill* court case. The agreement marks an end to the decades-long Hartford-region school segregation case and requires the State of Connecticut to comply with the terms of a Comprehensive School Choice Plan.

Below is a summary of the terms of the agreement, its impacts on the Hartford region and the State of Connecticut, and how the Student-Centered Funding proposal strengthens the agreement and benefits districts across the state.

Key Terms of the Agreement

- State commits to **ensuring 100% of Hartford students** wishing to attend a school choice program will be able to do so by the 2028-29 school year.
- **Expands, reformulates, and creates school choice options** in *Sheff* region to increase diversity and attract students.
- Requires *Sheff* magnet schools to **receive at LEAST their current total funding amount**, consisting of their per-student grant plus tuition, through the life of the agreement – regardless of any changes to the state magnet grant or the ability of districts to charge tuition.
- By the 2028-29 school year, **a minimum of 2,737 new seats will be added** for Hartford students to attend area magnet schools, Open Choice districts, and technical high schools.
- Open Choice grant for receiving districts in the *Sheff* region will **increase by \$2,000 per student¹ to incentivize suburban districts** to open up an additional 450 new seats for Hartford students.
- **Additional funding will be provided to Open Choice districts** that enroll students at entry grades² or increase available seats by 20% or more from the previous year.
- From FY 23 - FY 25, the **State will provide \$12.6 million to magnet school operators** to establish new extracurricular opportunities and provide or increase athletic offerings.

¹ Grant will increase by \$2,000 across all attendance percentages. For more on how Open Choice grant funding works, please visit <https://ctschoolfinance.org/resource-assets/Connecticuts-Open-Choice-Program.pdf>.

² Entry grades are Pre-K, kindergarten, 6th grade, and 9th grade.

Impacts of the Agreement

- Sending districts — such as Hartford, New Britain, and East Hartford — will still be required to pay tuition for students attending magnet schools outside their districts and will be **required to pay additional tuition payments** that are dependent on the number of new students who attend RESC-operated magnet schools.
 - This **increased tuition cost will be a new expense** for many of the state's already under-resourced districts.
 - However, under current law, **Hartford Public Schools is not able to charge tuition** for students attending magnet schools they operate.
- **Maintains funding system for schools of choice** that does not take into account student learning needs or the ability of sending towns to financially support students.
- State will be required to provide grants at current amounts for resident students attending in-district magnet schools, which would **continue existing inequities in the state's education funding system** moving forward.
- **Additional Hartford neighborhood schools may be closed** due to the number of new choice seats for Hartford students (minimum of 2,737 seats by school year 2028-29).
 - The number of new choice school seats accounts for **approximately 15% of Hartford Public Schools' current enrollment**.
- Agreement **further fragments education finance system** by creating different grant amounts for districts participating in the Open Choice program based on location, with grants being higher for districts in the Greater Hartford Region than districts throughout the rest of the state.

Student-Centered Funding & the Agreement

- Student-Centered Funding **complements and strengthens the Sheff agreement**, and does NOT interfere with any of the agreement's terms.
- Students attending schools of choice will be **funded based on their learning needs** under the Student-Centered Funding proposal.
- Student-Centered Funding **alleviates any negative financial impact** sending districts may experience as a result of the agreement's expansion of magnet seats.
- Student-Centered Funding **addresses the funding needs of students and districts throughout Connecticut**, rather than solely the *Sheff* region.