




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Interdistrict Magnet School Operators and Host Districts

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner 

DATE: August 19, 2020

SUBJECT: Interdistrict Magnet Schools Reduced-Isolation Standards

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section (C.G.S.) 10-264r, the Commissioner of Education promulgates the following standards for a reduced-isolation setting for interdistrict magnet schools under the aforementioned act.

Reduced-Isolation Student – For purposes of C.G.S. Section 10-264r and 10-264l, a reduced-isolation student is a student who identifies as Native American, Asian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, and/or White, and does not identify as any part as Black/African American, or Latinx/Hispanic.

Reduced-Isolation Standard – Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-264l(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, interdistrict magnet schools must (a) restrict the number of students that enroll in the program from a participating district to not more than 75% of the total enrollment of the program (the “Residency Standard”); and (b) maintain a total school enrollment in accordance with the reduced-isolation setting (“RIS”) standards as follows:

- a. Non-Sheff Interdistrict Magnet Schools Commencing Operation Prior to July 1, 2005– A school meets the RIS standard under 10-264l, if, by the 2021-22 school year or thereafter, the percentage of reduced-isolation students enrolled at the school equals at least 25% of the total school enrollment; provided, however, that any such school/program that enrolls less than 25% reduced-isolation students shall be deemed to provide a RIS if such school enrolls at least 20% reduced-isolation students and is operating pursuant to a compliance plan approved by the Commissioner of Education. The compliance plan must be designed to bring the number of reduced-isolation students of such interdistrict magnet school program into compliance with the 25% RIS standard.
 - Compliance Plan Prior to the 2021-22 School Year: Prior to the 2021-22 school year, any interdistrict magnet school in operation prior to July 1, 2005 that does not meet at least the 20% RIS standard must be operating pursuant to a compliance plan approved by the Commissioner. The compliance plan must be designed to bring the number of reduced-isolation students of such interdistrict magnet school program into compliance with the 25% RIS standard by the 2021-22 school year.
- b. Non-Sheff Interdistrict Magnet Schools Commencing Operation After July 1, 2005 – A school meets the RIS standard under 10-264l, if the percentage of reduced-isolation students

enrolled at the school equals at least 25% of the total school enrollment; provided, however, that any such school/program that enrolls less than 25% reduced-isolation students shall be deemed to provide a RIS if such school enrolls at least 20% reduced-isolation students and is operating pursuant to a compliance plan approved by the Commissioner of Education. The compliance plan must be designed to bring the number of reduced-isolation students of such interdistrict magnet school program into compliance with the 25% RIS standard.

- c. Sheff Interdistrict Magnet School – For the purposes of Section 10-264r and 10-264l, the RIS standard shall be as defined in accordance with the Stipulated Agreement (herein referred to as the “Phase IV Stipulation”) and Court’s Order on January 10, 2020.
- Maximizing Hartford Enrollment: Within available appropriations, the Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) may direct a *Sheff* interdistrict magnet school to maximize Hartford-resident enrollment within the standards set by the Commissioner.
 - Lottery Protocols: RSCO may direct any operator to develop and implement specific lottery protocols for purposes of meeting the standards set by the Commissioner and maximizing Hartford-resident enrollment within those standards, subject to order of the court.

1% Variance from Residency or RIS Standard for Non-*Sheff* Schools – A non-*Sheff* interdistrict magnet school shall be deemed to provide a reduced-isolation setting if it is within 1% of the applicable Residency or RIS standard and if, the school is operating pursuant to a compliance plan that is designed to bring the enrollment of such interdistrict magnet school program into compliance with the 75% Residency Standard and/or 25% RIS standard, as applicable, and such plan is approved by the Commissioner.

Waiver - If an interdistrict magnet school does not meet the applicable RIS standard promulgated by the Commissioner, there shall not be any negative consequences for any school, school operator, or the State Department of Education (“SDE”). However, schools must be operating pursuant to an approved compliance plan designed to bring the school population into compliance with the standards outlined herein and maximize (a) reduced-isolation educational opportunities; and/or (b) opportunities in settings with evidence of other indices of diversity, including but not limited to, racial, geographic, socioeconomic, percentage of special education students and English Learner students, achievement, and other factors. An interdistrict magnet school that does not meet the 75% Residency Standard as set forth herein, must be operating pursuant to an approved compliance plan designed to bring the school into compliance with the residency enrollment requirements in order to remain eligible for the interdistrict magnet operating grant.

Data Verification – The state may at any time exercise its right to seek an audit of a school's data and records pertaining to student race and ethnicity to verify the accuracy of the data.