



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Series 2007-2008
Circular Letter: C-4

TO: Superintendents of Schools
FROM: Dr. Mark K. McQuillan, Commissioner of Education
DATE: August 8, 2007
SUBJECT: Interdistrict Magnet School Parent Choice Legislation

The General Assembly has recently reaffirmed its commitment to fully enrolling its magnet schools by adopting Section 42 of P.A. 07-3 of the June Special Session, *An Act Concerning Implementing the Provisions of the Budget Concerning Education*. That section provides, in part, as follows:

“After accommodating students from participating districts in accordance with the approved enrollment agreement, an interdistrict magnet school that has unused student capacity may enroll directly into its program any interested student. A student from a district that is not participating in the interdistrict magnet school shall be given preference. The local or regional board of education otherwise responsible for educating such student shall contribute funds to support the operation of the interdistrict magnet school in an amount equal to the per student tuition, if any, charged to participating districts.”

This means that operators of interdistrict magnet schools, whether they are RESCs or other school districts, may enroll students from non-participating districts if they have seats available. If this should occur, you would be required to allow a student to attend the magnet school and pay tuition, if any, for that student. Note that the statute requires that if this option is implemented, preference must be given to districts which do not participate in the magnet school. If you are a non-participating district, this may have an impact on you, since the law is effective as of July 1, 2007. If you are a participating district, you should already know how many of your students participate in which magnet schools.

I have written to the RESCs and superintendents of schools who operate interdistrict magnet schools that if they intend to implement this parent choice option for the 2007-2008 school year, they must notify participating and non-participating districts of this decision as soon as possible. They must also notify the State Department of Education (SDE). I have also recommended that they have a process in place, which should include a lottery, to select students who will be able to enroll in those slots.

This option will assist operators of magnet schools to meet or maintain *Sheff* desegregation goals and magnet school enrollment requirements. The State is committed to reducing racial, ethnic and economic isolation and it is hopeful that passage of this parental choice option will make that goal easier to reach and maintain.

Please contact Mark Linabury, Acting Chief, Bureau of Choice Programs, at (860) 713-6588 or by e-mail at mark.linabury@ct.gov or William Magnotta, Magnet Schools Program Manager, at (860) 713-6589 or by e-mail at william.magnotta@ct.gov, if you have further questions.

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