



# NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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## **Hartford Region School Choice Lottery Will Proceed in May; State Continuing Efforts to Strengthen Diversity in Schools, Create Greater Access for Black and Hispanic Students**

(HARTFORD, CT) – The Connecticut State Department of Education today announced that the Greater Hartford Regional School Choice Office (“RSCO”) lottery will proceed and families will learn of magnet school and open choice placements in May. The current stipulated agreement with the Sheff v. O’Neill plaintiffs concludes on June 30, 2017, and no new agreement has been reached. Nonetheless, the State will continue to fulfill its responsibility to the 1996 decision. Moving forward with this lottery will sustain the State’s commitment to school diversity and provide additional black and Hispanic students in Hartford access to high quality magnet school seats.

“All students – regardless of zip code and life circumstance – deserve to go to a great school and receive a great education,” Governor Dannel P. Malloy said. “The goal remains to get more Hartford students into high quality magnet school seats and ultimately to address some of the unintended inequities that resulted from a well-meaning desegregation program. From school choice systems to education funding, we need to shift as a state to focus our efforts on lifting the schools that need the most help so that all students – especially our most disadvantaged students – have a chance to rise to their potential.”

“The desegregation efforts that came out of Sheff v. O’Neill have had a positive impact on the lives of thousands of students – including students of color living in Hartford. However, we know that we can do more,” Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell said. “Today we build upon the progress made under Sheff thus far by ensuring that more black and Hispanic students in Hartford have access to high-quality schools.”

While no stipulated agreement is in place for the coming school year, the lottery must proceed so that students and parents are not left in limbo. The lottery will advance the simultaneous priorities of diversity, high quality education, and increased access for Hartford students. In addition, the department will continue working with lawmakers to determine if any legislation is appropriate at this time.

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