
Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

Position Statement on Public School Choice

October 7, 2009

The Connecticut State Board of Education is committed to closing the achievement gap and ensuring that every student has the opportunity to access high-quality programs based on his or her educational needs and interests. This commitment is realized in schools that offer challenging, relevant and rigorous curriculum and instruction, and a creative and flexible environment that values each student's unique abilities, talents, interests and learning styles regardless of racial, ethnic or economic backgrounds.

By offering all students and their families public school choices among a range of high-quality educational programs and settings, we believe our educational system will maximize the opportunity for each student to achieve his or her highest potential. The state successfully utilizes public school choice options as tools to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation. In addition to benefitting students statewide, public school choice has been an effective tool in reducing racial, ethnic and economic isolation in the Hartford region consistent with the court settlement in *Milo Sheff, et al. v. William A. O'Neill, et al.*

No single curriculum, educational model or pedagogy is best for all students. Rather, in its quest to deliver high-quality public education to every student, each local or regional board of education must consider a combination of educationally sound practices and approaches which are tailored to meet all students' strengths and needs. The State Board of Education encourages each local or regional school board to utilize existing statutory authority to increase school and program opportunities by providing a wider selection of rigorous and culturally relevant educational experiences within and across school districts for all students. Also, parents and students are encouraged to explore public school choice programming through local or regional school districts, Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), the Regional School Choice Office serving the Hartford region and the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Public school choice programs have been found to directly and positively impact levels of parental involvement and student attendance, achievement, motivation and community engagement. In addition, public school choice programs have increasingly engaged in partnerships with public or independent institutions of higher education, including community colleges, to prepare students for postsecondary educational opportunities.

The State Board of Education supports efforts to offer the following public school choice options: interdistrict magnet schools, public charter schools, open choice, interdistrict cooperative grant programs, state technical high schools, and regional agricultural science and technology education centers.

Public school choice programs are an integral component of the state's public school system. The Connecticut State Board of Education believes the wide variety of public school choice programs offered in the state further increases opportunities for all students to learn in a manner that is customized to their needs, interests and abilities.
