



For Immediate Release:

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State Department of Education Reaches Agreement with Plaintiffs in *Sheff v. O'Neill* Litigation on 1 Year Extension

(Hartford, CT)—Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor today announced that a settlement has been reached for a one year extension to the Phase II stipulated agreement under the Connecticut State Supreme Court’s order in the *Sheff v. O’Neill* case. The settlement reached today builds upon the Department’s ongoing efforts to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation in the Hartford public schools and surrounding areas.

“The agreement reflects our continued effort to provide ever better educational options for Hartford students,” said Commissioner Pryor. “We believe the agreement reached today represents a fair settlement and one that maximizes the impact of available resources.”

The Phase II stipulated agreement provided the opportunity to extend the agreement for an additional year in the event additional time might be needed to reach the goals. The targets for the agreement, which continue for 2013-2014, are either 80 percent of demand met for Hartford’s resident minority students seeking a reduced racial isolation educational setting, or the placement of 41 percent of Hartford’s minority students in reduced racially isolated settings.

Details of the settlement outline the expansion of opportunities at existing magnet schools, the addition of new magnet schools, and an increase of available seats at Open Choice Schools. Furthermore, Vinal Technical High School, E. C. Goodwin Technical High School, and Howell Cheney Technical High School will expand opportunities for more Hartford resident students, while A.I. Prince Technical High School will expand opportunities for suburban students.

Pending legislative approval, the agreement also outlines plans to increase the per pupil operating grants for Open Choice schools that exceed 4 percent participation rates, and to award grants of \$750,000 for local or regional boards of education for the expansion of Open Choice seats.

The Department has begun the search for a full-time Director of Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) who will focus on the implementation of the agreement. Marketing efforts to apprise Hartford resident parents of New Schools and Opportunities lotteries will continue, as will efforts to recruit more participating schools in the surrounding areas for Open Choice opportunities. Additionally, the Department will continue to operate satellite RSCO offices, and will identify one primary satellite office to assist Hartford parents navigate the lottery process.

At the end of year 5 of the Phase II stipulated agreement, the state met the demand of 72 percent of Hartford resident minority students for integrated settings and facilitated the placement of 37 percent of Hartford resident minority students in reduced isolation educational settings.

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