



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships  
Policy 2020-1

**TO:** Interdistrict Magnet School and Open Choice Program Operators in the Greater Hartford Region (Sheff Region)

**FROM:** Keith M. Norton, Chief Strategic Planning Officer *KMN*  
Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships

**DATE:** August 31, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Enrollment Policies for Interdistrict Magnet Schools and the Open Choice Programs in the Sheff Region

This memorandum articulates important updated enrollment and grant payment policies relevant to school choice programs in the Greater Hartford Region (hereinafter referred to as “Sheff Region”). We provide these policies as a reminder of Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) procedures and to ensure consistent enrollment practices among operators. These updated policies reflect adjustments to accommodate enrollment shifts resulting from public reaction to the pandemic.

### **Regional School Choice Office Enrollment**

Interdistrict Magnet Schools (IMS) and Open Choice Programs (OC) operating in the Sheff Region **must** use the CSDE’s Regional School Choice Office (RSCO) application, placement process, and lottery protocols to enroll all students.

#### Direct Enrollment

Students enrolled outside of this enrollment process, including those that are enrolled after October 1 of each school year, are considered “directly enrolled” and the IMS operators<sup>1</sup> and/or OC school districts will not receive the applicable operating and/or enrollment grants for such students through the entire term of the students’ enrollment in such school.

#### Dual Enrollment

IMS operators may not dually enroll students in school choice programs unless specifically approved by CSDE. IMS operators will not receive the applicable operating and/or enrollment grants for such students through the entire term of the students’ enrollment in such school.

[View the full Single School Enrollment Standard policy. CLICK HERE](#)

[View the full Dual Enrollment policy. CLICK HERE](#)

#### Foreign Student Enrollment

All foreign students attending an interdistrict magnet school must be reported in the public school information system. IMS operators will not receive the applicable operating and/or enrollment grants for foreign students through the entire term of the students’ enrollment in such school.

[View the full Foreign Student Enrollment policy. CLICK HERE](#)

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<sup>1</sup> CGS §10-264I (Rev. 2019) and CGS §10-266aa

## IMS Residency and Reduced-Isolation Setting Goals<sup>2</sup>

The Phase IV Stipulation and Order, approved by the Connecticut Superior Court on January 10, 2020, provides the Reduced Isolation goals and standards for IMS in the Greater Hartford Region that assist the state in meeting its obligations pursuant to the decision in *Sheff v. O'Neill*, 238 Conn. 1 (1996), and the governing Stipulation. The Phase IV Stipulation explicitly acknowledges the ongoing commitment to meeting the desegregation goals from the prior stipulations and Superior Court ruling from August 7, 2017 in the *Sheff* case, but defines a reduced isolation setting for purposes of compliance as a magnet school that maximizes socioeconomic diversity. For 2020-21, the Phase IV Stipulation does not authorize any negative consequences for any school or school operator that does not meet the standards for a reduced isolation setting. The Interdistrict Magnet Schools Reduced-Isolation Standards (RI Standards) promulgated by the Commissioner pursuant to Section 10-264r of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) and issued by the CSDE on August 19, 2020, incorporates the Phase IV Stipulation and Order as the governing reduced isolation setting standard for interdistrict magnet schools in the Greater Hartford Region. The RI Standards are available at the following link. [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Strategic-Planning/Interdistrict\\_Magnet\\_Schools\\_Reduced-Isolation\\_Standards.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Strategic-Planning/Interdistrict_Magnet_Schools_Reduced-Isolation_Standards.pdf)

### Residency:

Per statute, an IMS **may not** enroll more than 75% of its total school enrollment from a single participating district. For the 2020-21 school year, CSDE will waive fiscal penalties associated with noncompliance with the residency standard if the noncompliance is a result of enrollment fluctuations from the pandemic.

### Reduced-Isolation Setting:

Per the Phase IV Stipulation and Order, an IMS provides a reduced isolation setting if its incoming enrollment does not exceed 60% enrollments from the low socioeconomic tier. By December 1 of each year, any magnet school that enrolls more than 58% of its incoming students from the low socioeconomic tier and/or less than 30% of its incoming enrollment from the high socioeconomic tier must be operating pursuant to a Corrective Action Plan that demonstrates reasonable efforts to meet the socioeconomic diversity goals for a reduced isolation setting within an established compliance period. For 2020-21, the Phase IV Stipulation does not authorize any negative consequences for any school or school operator that does not meet the standards for a reduced isolation setting.

The Phase IV Stipulation continues the ongoing commitment to meeting the 25% reduced-isolation goals from the prior stipulations and Superior Court ruling from August 7, 2017 in the *Sheff* case, which define reduced-isolation enrollment goals as a percentage RI enrollment equal to at least 25% of total school enrollment.<sup>3</sup> The CSDE will continue to annually report school-by-school data regarding this goal based on October 1 PSIS data.

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<sup>2</sup> C.G.S. §10-264l and C.G.S. §10-264r

<sup>3</sup> For purposes of the Phase IV Stipulation, a “reduced-isolation” student is defined as a student who self-identifies as Native American, Asian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, and/or White, and does not identify as Black/African American, or Hispanic.

**Enrollment of at Least 50 Percent Hartford-Resident Students in RESC IMS**

An IMS operated by a Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) in the Sheff Region, including Goodwin College, must enroll a minimum of 50% of the incoming students, in any grade served by the school, with Hartford-residents each academic school year.<sup>4</sup>

Failure to comply with the stated criteria typically results in a per pupil grant in the amount of \$8,058 (the non-Sheff rate) for one-half of the total number of non-Hartford students enrolled in the school over 50% of the total school enrollment. The remainder of the total school enrollment remains eligible to receive the per pupil grant in the amount of \$10,652, subject to available appropriations. For the 2020-21 school year, CSDE will waive fiscal penalties associated with noncompliance with the 50% Hartford-resident enrollment requirement if the noncompliance is a result of enrollment fluctuations from the pandemic.

**IMS per Pupil Rates**

Consistent with the IMS enrollment criteria and within available appropriations, the Sheff Region per pupil rates for 2020-21 are as follows:

Region	Type of Operator/ Specific IMS	Enrollment Criteria	Per Pupil Rates	
Sheff	Host Magnet/ District Operated	No more than 75% student enrollment from a single participating school district; incoming enrollment reflects SES diversity goals (incoming enrollment should not exceed 60% incoming enrollment from the low socioeconomic tier). Penalty waived for 2020-21 if noncompliance is the result of enrollment shifts due to the pandemic.	In-District \$0	Non-District \$13,315
Sheff	RESC	No more than 75% from a single participating school district; no more than 60% Hartford-resident enrollment; incoming enrollment reflects SES diversity goals (incoming enrollment should not exceed 60% incoming enrollment from the low socioeconomic tier); enroll at least 50% incoming students from Hartford. Penalty waived for 2020-21 if noncompliance is the result of enrollment shifts due to the pandemic.	\$10,652	
Sheff	RESC	An IMS that meets other eligibility goals but enrolls less than 50% incoming students from Hartford receives non-Sheff rate for ½ of non-Hartford student enrollments over 50% of total school enrollment; receives Sheff rate for the remainder of enrollments. Penalty waived for 2020-21 if noncompliance is the result of enrollment shifts due to the pandemic.	Non-Sheff Rate \$8,058	Sheff Rate \$10,652
Sheff	Part-Time Programs	Meets other eligibility goals and enrolls students in a part-time interdistrict magnet program	65% of the applicable grant amount	

Source: C.G.S. §§10-264(c)(3)(D), (F) (Rev. 2019)

**Fiscal Caps**

<sup>4</sup> For RESC IMS, including Goodwin College, CGS §10-264(c)(3)(D) also limits enrollment of Hartford-resident students to 60% of total school enrollment. This 60% maximum for Hartford-resident enrollment does not apply to Sheff magnets operated by local boards of education (Host Magnets).

Since 2014 per statute,<sup>5</sup> IMS operators are eligible to receive a total grant payment in an amount up to the grant the operator was eligible to receive based on the aggregate enrollment of the operator's individual magnet schools in a prior school year. The "capped" enrollment is set by the CSDE and is subject to available appropriations. IMS operators will not receive the applicable operating grant for enrollments above such "capped" aggregate enrollments without prior authorization from the CSDE.

### **Financial Reduction or Financial Penalty**

Typically, failure to comply with the various criteria covered herein might impact the operator's IMS based on CSDE's review of October 1 enrollment data. However, for 2020-21, IMS operators will not receive a penalty to their grant allocation due to noncompliance with residency or the 50% Hartford-resident enrollment requirements if the noncompliance is from shifts in enrollments due to the pandemic. In addition, the Phase IV Stipulation does not authorize any negative consequences for any school or school operator that does not meet the standards for a reduced isolation setting for the 2020-21 school year. Irrespective of whether CSDE will waive certain penalties this year, CSDE expects the IMS operator to monitor enrollments to attempt to reconcile non-compliance. CSDE will notify operators of discrepancies it becomes aware of through its own concurrent monitoring of enrollment data.

#### Residency:

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 IMS operating grant. For the 2020-21 school year, the CSDE will waive fiscal impacts from residency noncompliance if noncompliance is a result of shifts in enrollments from the pandemic. The IMS must complete an approved compliance plan.

#### Reduced-Isolation Setting:

By December 1 of each year, any magnet school that enrolls more than 58% of its incoming students from the low socioeconomic tier and/or less than 30% of its incoming enrollment from the high socioeconomic tier must be operating pursuant to a Corrective Action Plan that demonstrates reasonable efforts to meet the socioeconomic diversity goals for a reduced isolation setting within an established compliance period. In addition to schools that fall within the aforementioned parameters, CSDE expects that all interdistrict magnet schools in the Sheff Region will complete a Corrective Action Plan to ensure continued compliance with socioeconomic diversity goals and other goals set forth in the Phase IV Stipulation.

### **Operator/District Actions**

IMS operators and OC districts must implement and communicate the contents of this policy in school and/or district administrative documents and publications (e.g., operations plans and enrollment policies) to facilitate compliance with the enrollment policies.

### **CSDE Contact**

Please contact the Office of Strategic Planning and Partnerships at [SDE.StrategicPlanning@ct.gov](mailto:SDE.StrategicPlanning@ct.gov) or [860-713-6465](tel:860-713-6465) with questions.

KMN:rcc

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<sup>5</sup> C.G.S. §10-264f (Rev. 2019)

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