

Creating More Equitable Schools: Interdistrict Magnet School Location

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What is School Diversity

Why School Diversity is Important

- Academic Outcomes:
- In a review of the literature Condron et al found that the achievement gap between Black and White students decreased when black students were exposed to more white students (2012)
- In a study related to CREC schools Bifucolo et. al found that students who attended diverse magnet schools had higher fourth grade reading and math scores than subgroups throughout the state.

Why Diverse Schools are Important

- Black students who attend desegregated schools are more likely to work in racially integrated environments and have white collar and professional jobs in the private sector (Crain, 1994)
- Racially integrated classrooms lead to higher college and career aspirations and socially integrated networks. (Frankenberg (2007)and Lee (2004)

The Path To Magnet Schools:

- Brown V. Board of Education establishes the need to desegregate schools with all deliberate speed.
- Milliken v. Bradley found it unconstitutional to compel an interdistrict remedy for intradistrict segregation
- Inner city school districts may still offer choice; however, this choice remains within district boundaries; therefore, racial disparities persist due to the population of the city.
- “Magnet schools grew out of desegregation policies in the 1970’s. Magnet schools could offer an alternative to mandatory assignment, and they provided incentives aimed at decreasing ‘white flight’” (Blank, 2013, p. 81).

Integration Policies and School Assignment

- The Supreme Court decision in 2007 in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle* limits the use of using an individual students race in school assignment policies . In limiting the use of race as a factor in school assignment policies, the Supreme Court points to a public school system in which race is not the key to equality.
- "research generally finds that socioeconomic school integration is an even more powerful lever for raising academic achievement than racial integration per se" (Kahlenberg, 2006)

Integration Methods: CREC Magnet Schools

- The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) is one of six Regional Education Service Centers in Connecticut. It operates interdistrict magnet schools which are open to students of member districts.
- According to the CREC website, during the 2011-2012 school year, schools operated by CREC were able to serve diverse populations of students with a racial makeup as follows: “Serving 30% White students, 33% Black students, 28% Hispanic students, and 47% students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, CREC Magnet schools are more racially and economically diverse than the state” (CREC Website).

Why Create an Interdistrict Magnet School Program in Springfield, Massachusetts?

- The rate of hypersegregation in Springfield Public schools has been increasing since 2000 as the SPS population has become majority minority
- Although Hartford, Connecticut has a higher rate of students in hypersegregated schools, the rate has been decreasing since 2000.
- The literature points to improved educational outcomes for minority and low SES students when they attend diverse schools. CREC has been able to create an interdistrict magnet program that enrolls a racially and economically diverse student body, while closing gaps in academic achievement among students who are minorities and/or receive FRPL.

Goals of the Proposed Magnet School Program

- 1) To be reflective of the Hampden County population economically. According to the American Community Survey the median family income in Hampden County is 64, 719 dollars. The goal of the interdistrict magnet network would be to maintain a student population where half of the students were above the median household income and half were below.
- 2) To create a racially and ethnically diverse school community that seeks to achieve balance among racial and ethnic groups

