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### Missing the Goal: A Visual Guide to Sheff v. O'Neill School Desegregation: June 2007

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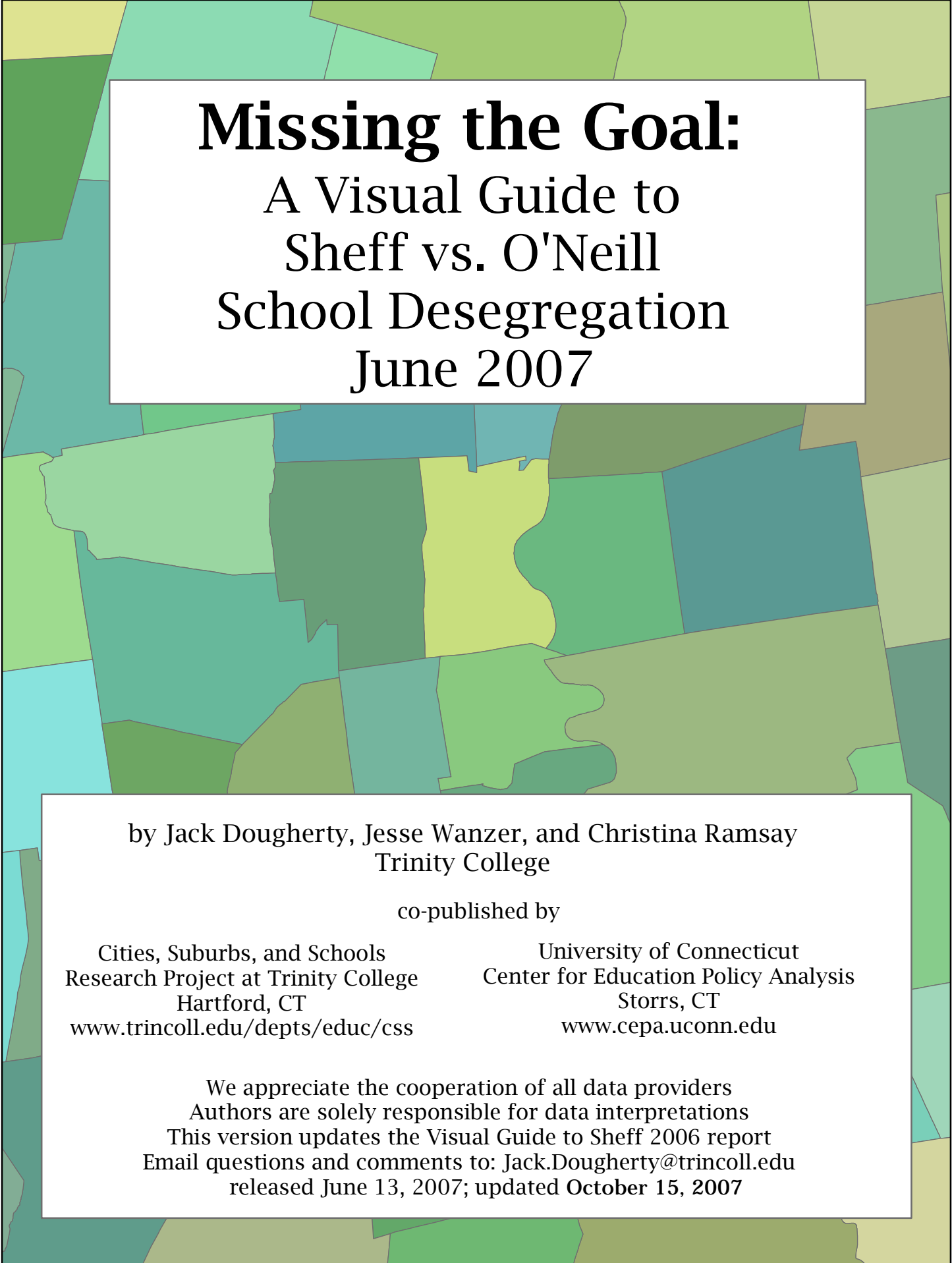


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# Missing the Goal:

## A Visual Guide to Sheff vs. O'Neill School Desegregation June 2007

by Jack Dougherty, Jesse Wanzer, and Christina Ramsay  
Trinity College

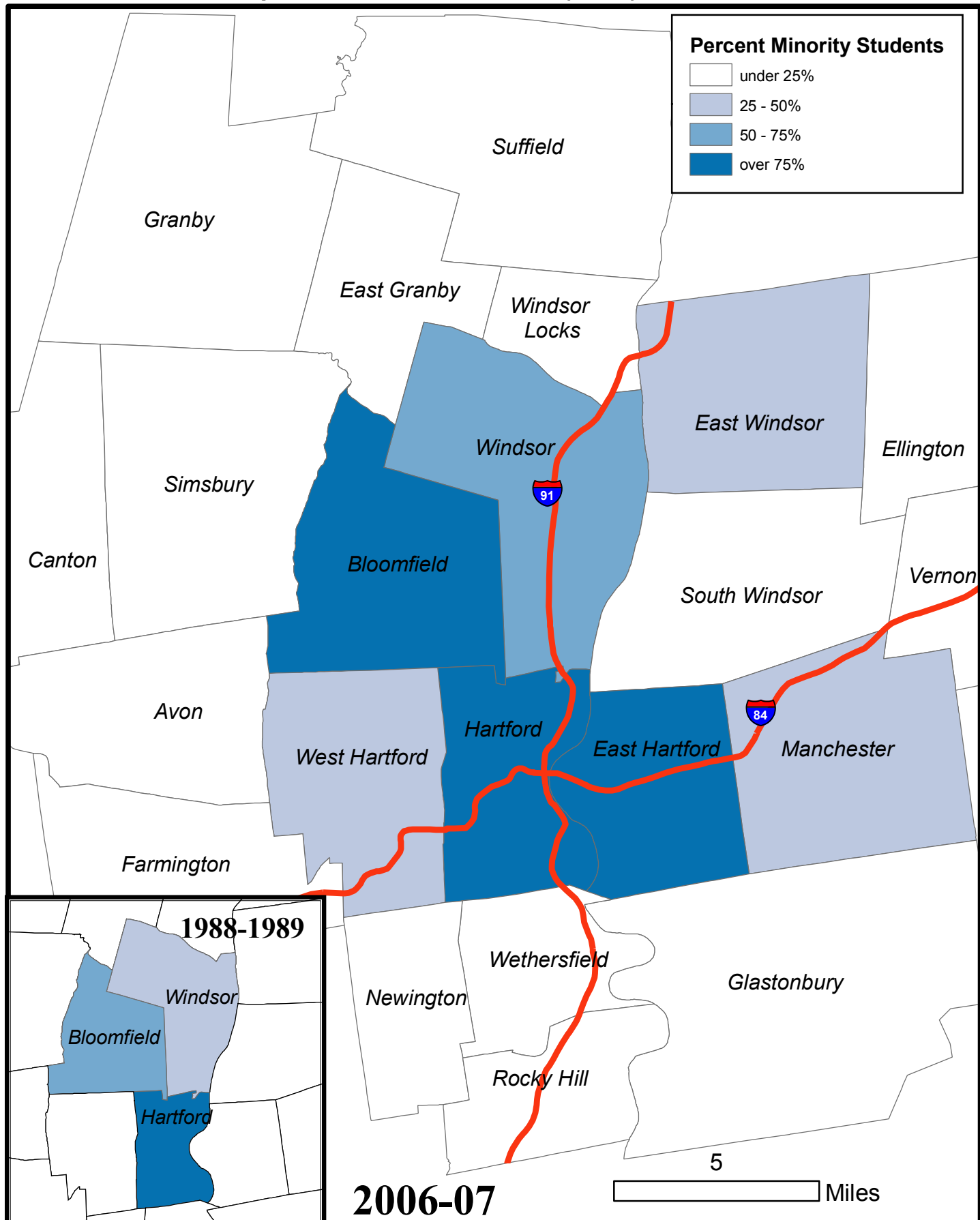
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We appreciate the cooperation of all data providers  
Authors are solely responsible for data interpretations  
This version updates the Visual Guide to Sheff 2006 report  
Email questions and comments to: [Jack.Dougherty@trincoll.edu](mailto:Jack.Dougherty@trincoll.edu)  
released June 13, 2007; updated October 15, 2007

**Map 1: Racial Composition of the 22-district Sheff Region of Metropolitan Hartford, 1988-89 (inset) and 2006-07**



# A Brief Chronology of Sheff vs. O’Neill

## 1989: Sheff lawsuit filed

When Elizabeth Horton Sheff and other parents filed a lawsuit on behalf of their children against then-Governor William O’Neill, they charged that Connecticut’s system of separate city and suburban school districts led to racially segregated schools, which violated their state constitutional rights to equal educational opportunity.

## 1996: State Supreme Court rules for plaintiffs

After a prolonged trial, Connecticut’s Supreme Court split 4-3 in favor of the Sheff plaintiffs, ruling that the racial and socioeconomic isolation of Hartford schoolchildren violated the constitution. However, the Court did not specify a goal, remedy, or timetable to resolve this problem.

**Table 1: School Districts in the Sheff region, by race, then and now**

Districts	Percent Minority 1988-89	Percent Minority 2006-07
Hartford	91%	94%
Bloomfield	74%	95%
Windsor	31%	66%
East Hartford	23%	76%
Manchester	12%	46%
West Hartford	12%	34%
East Windsor	10%	27%
South Windsor	8%	17%
Vernon	7%	25%
Newington	6%	22%
Rocky Hill	6%	20%
Farmington	6%	18%
Glastonbury	6%	14%
Windsor Locks	5%	19%
Wethersfield	4%	20%
Avon	4%	13%
Simsbury	4%	10%
East Granby	3%	11%
Suffield	3%	6%
Ellington	2%	7%
Canton	2%	7%
Granby	2%	7%

Note: In 1988-89, Project Concern students were not included in suburban totals, but in recent years Project Choice students are included  
 Source: CT State Department of Education (CSDE). Revised Oct 2007.

## 2003: Sheff legal settlement

Sheff plaintiffs and state defendants agreed to a legal settlement, approved by the General Assembly, which relies upon voluntary desegregation efforts and additional funding to meet a goal:

### The 30% Goal

By June 2007, at least 30 percent of the public school minority students residing in Hartford will have an educational experience with reduced isolation through three voluntary programs:

#### a) Interdistrict magnet schools

By offering a more specialized curriculum than neighborhood schools, magnet schools are designed to attract students from residentially segregated urban and suburban districts.

#### b) Open Choice (also known as Project Choice)

A voluntary program where city students may transfer to a suburban school district (or vice versa), modeled on the former Project Concern program.

#### c) Interdistrict cooperative grants

Support for part-time exchange programs between racially isolated urban and suburban schools. May count toward a maximum of 3 percent of the total goal if sufficiently funded.

## June 2007: Proposed revision of Sheff settlement

Although 22 interdistrict magnet schools have been created and over 1,000 Hartford minority students attend suburban schools through Project Choice, these efforts have failed to meet the 30 percent goal, as described in this report. On June 6th, state education officials and plaintiffs announced a proposed revision of the Sheff settlement with additional state funding and new desegregation goals (starting at 22 percent in 2008-09, then rising to 41 percent by 2012). But as we issue this report, the tentative agreement has not yet been approved by the courts or the state legislature.

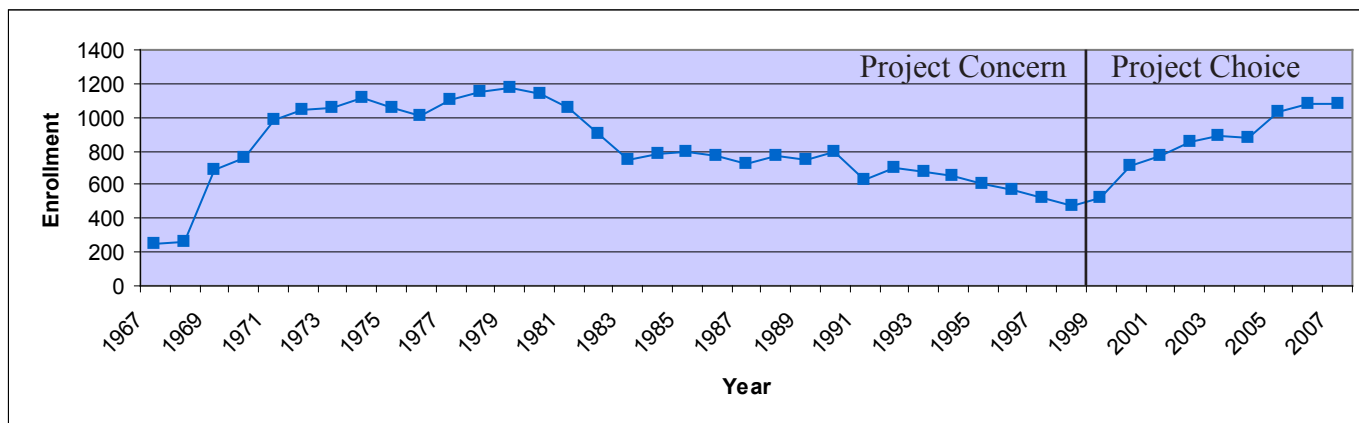
Sources: *Sheff v O’Neill* Jan 22, 2003 settlement; *Hartford Courant*

# How has Project Choice enrollment changed over time?

In 1966-67, the Hartford Public Schools launched Project Concern, which permitted city students to enroll in participating suburban schools. In 1998-99, this voluntary desegregation effort was reorganized into the state's Open Choice program, which in the Hartford area is administered by the Capitol Region Educational Council (CREC). The new program is commonly referred to as "Project Choice." Officially, both city-to-suburb and suburb-to-city transfers are permitted, and the program is not restricted to any racial group. But the vast majority of participants are Hartford minority students transferring into predominantly-white suburban schools. Over time, the most noteworthy changes have been:

- Project Concern enrollment reached its peak of approximately 1,175 students in 1979, then declined in the 1980s and early '90s, then rose again after being reorganized into Project Choice. But enrollment has remained stuck at approximately 1,000 students since 2004-05, despite the Sheff settlement authors' expectations that it would rise to 1,600.
- In the most affluent Sheff suburban districts, enrollment trends vary widely: some fell, while others rose.
- In recent years, Project Choice participation has been relatively higher in suburban districts located farther away from Hartford, as illustrated in Map 2.

**Chart 1: Project Concern/Choice Enrollment, School Year Ending 1967-2007**



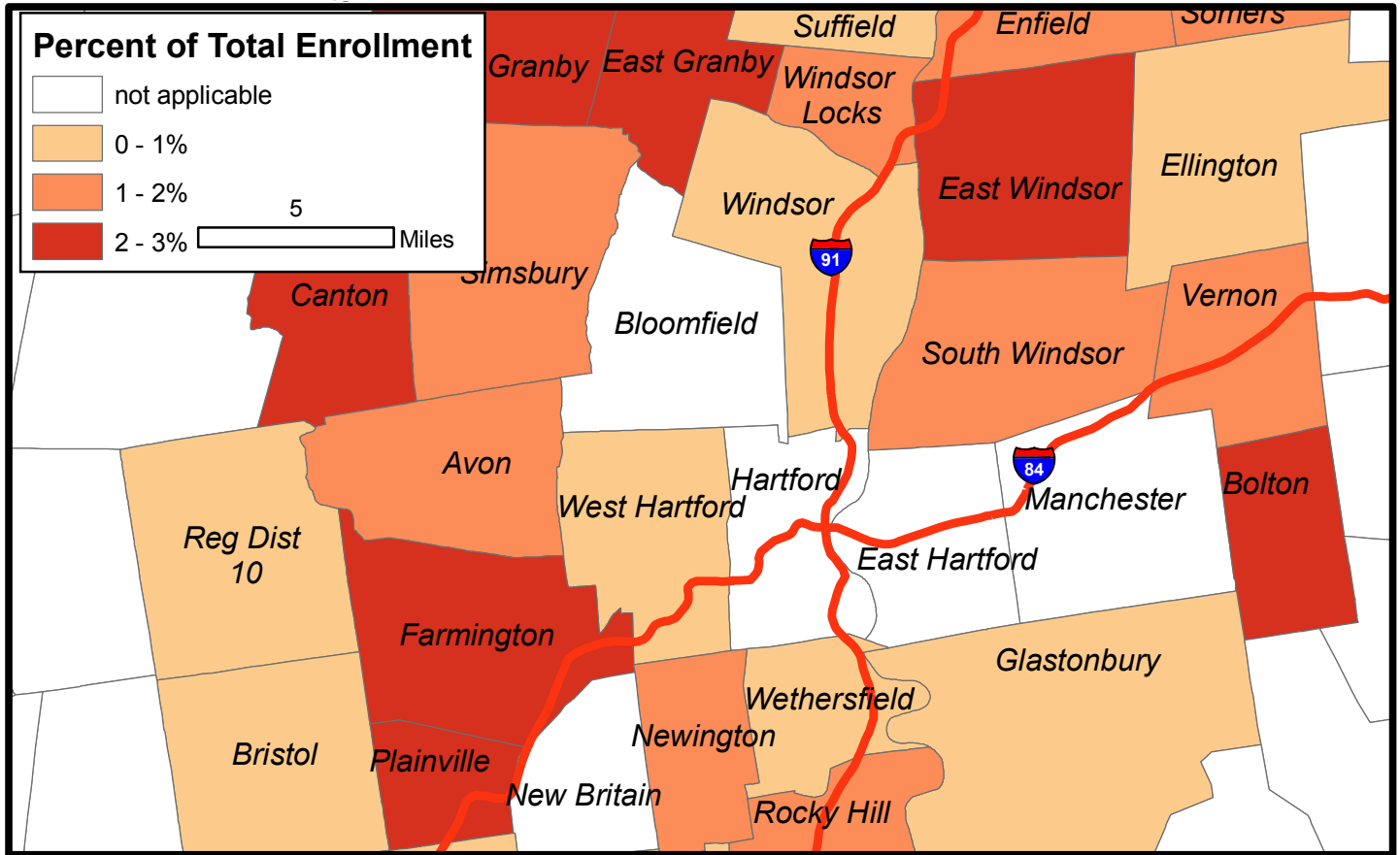
**Table 2: Proj Concern/Choice enrollment in most affluent Sheff districts**

District	1967	1977	1987	1997	2007
Avon	0	10	1	0	41
Farmington	62	165	93	108	95
Glastonbury	0	78	25	50	42
Granby	0	30	21	29	53
Simsbury	25	52	83	64	96
South Windsor	25	41	53	43	55
West Hartford	79	342	267	62	77

Notes: Both Chart 1 and Table 1 include mostly minority and some white students, and for 1999 onward, a small number of suburban students choosing to attend city schools. But Map 2 and Table 3 include only Hartford minority students attending suburban schools, to illustrate progress toward the 2003 Sheff settlement goal. The most affluent Sheff districts are those with the highest District Reference Group (DRG) ratings by CSDE. Sources: Prior to School Year Ending (SYE) 1996, Mary Carroll Reports, Project Concern; SYE 97-04, CSDE, October Public School Info System (PSIS); SYE 05-present, CSDE Oct & Jan PSIS (updated 30 June 2007)

# How much do suburbs participate in Project Choice?

**Map 2 & Table 3: Hartford minority student participation in Project Choice, by percent of total district enrollment, 2006-07**



District	Total Enrollment	Choice students	Percent of Total	District	Total Enrollment	Choice students	Percent of Total
East Windsor	1516	43	2.8%	South Windsor	5020	55	1.1%
Bolton	915	22	2.4%	Somers	1734	18	1.0%
Granby	2278	53	2.3%	Suffield	2592	23	0.9%
Canton	1730	39	2.3%	West Hartford	10115	76	0.8%
Plainville	2628	58	2.2%	Glastonbury	6766	42	0.6%
Farmington	4252	95	2.2%	Berlin	3273	14	0.4%
East Granby	933	20	2.1%	Bristol	9037	36	0.4%
Cromwell	2007	41	2.0%	Ellington	2535	10	0.4%
Simsbury	4992	96	1.9%	Wethersfield	3833	13	0.3%
Windsor Locks	1908	30	1.6%	Windsor	4132	13	0.3%
Rocky Hill	2582	33	1.3%	RSD #10	2824	8	0.3%
Enfield	6490	78	1.2%	Southington	6933	19	0.3%
Avon	3505	41	1.2%				
Newington	4590	52	1.1%	<b>Total</b>		<b>1,070</b>	
Vernon	3782	42	1.1%	<i>Source: CSDE, PSIS Oct 2006 &amp; Jan 2007</i>			

Note: Districts not receiving Project Choice Hartford students: Bloomfield, E Hartford, Manchester, New Britain

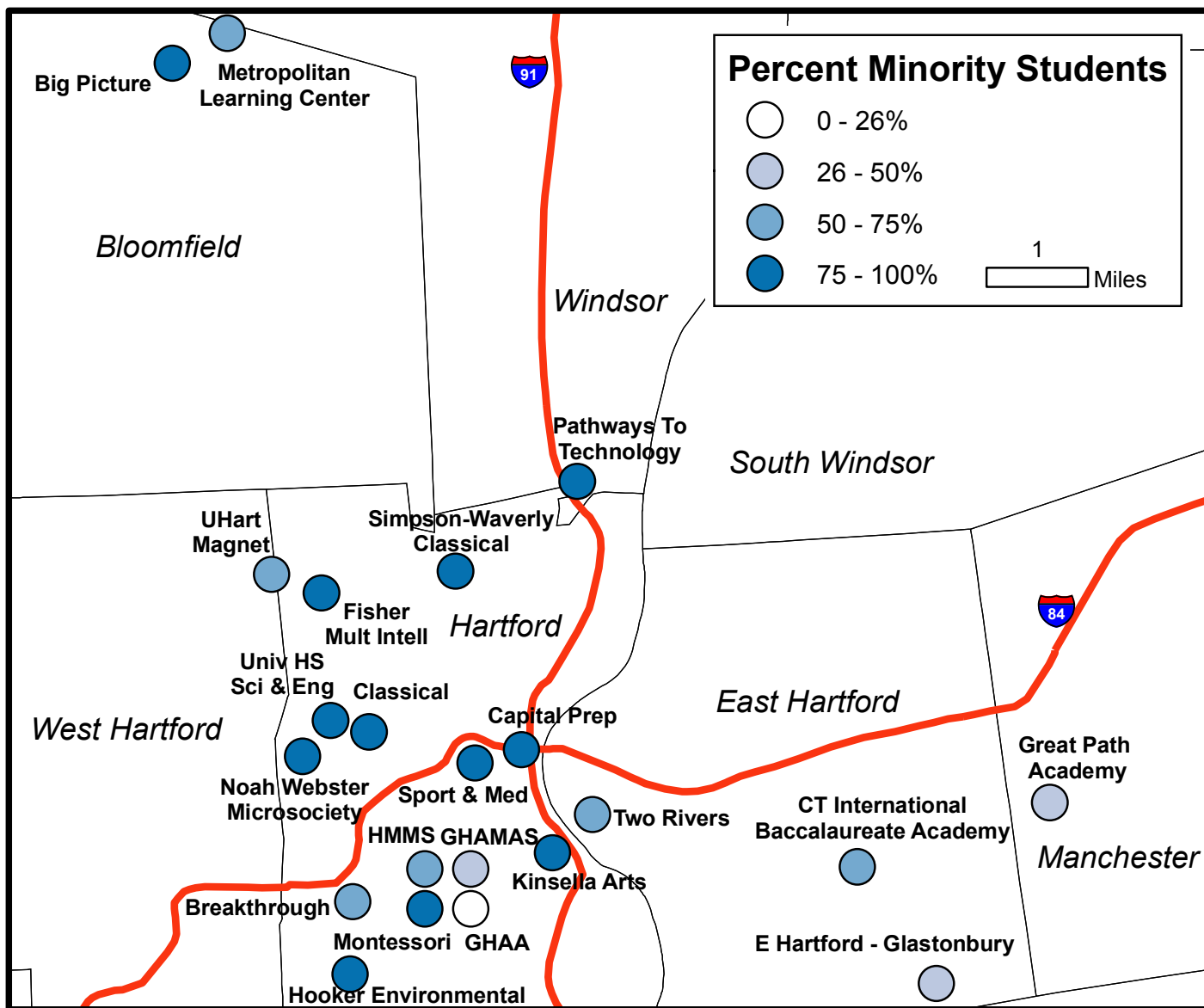
# Which magnet schools count toward the Sheff goal?

At present, 22 interdistrict magnet schools have been opened, offering a wide range of curricular specializations designed to attract students from both city and suburban districts. Most are managed by the Capitol Region Educational Council (CREC) or the Hartford Public Schools (HPS), with two others managed by suburban districts.

But not all magnet schools count toward the Sheff 30% goal. According to the 2003 settlement, a magnet qualifies if its proportion of minority students does not exceed an annual limit, calculated as the percentage of minority students in the entire 22-district Sheff region (currently 44%) plus 30 percentage points, for a total minority student limit of 74% in 2006-07. However, the settlement exempts schools from this limit during their first 3 years of operation. The state legislature approved the Sheff legal settlement in February 2003.

Still, while a magnet school may fail to meet the 2003 Sheff standard, it may continue to receive state funding. In May 2002, the state legislature amended CT Statute 10-264L, which currently holds that magnet schools established prior to July 2005 are not limited to the proportion of minority students they enroll (but those created after July 2005 must enroll between 25 to 75 percent minority). The existence of different state-approved racial standards for magnet schools has led to considerable confusion on this important policy issue.

**Map 3: Interdistrict Magnets in Hartford region, by Race, 2006-07**



To understand how Sheff settlement standards are applied, consider one example: the Greater Hartford Classical Magnet School, which opened in fall 2003. In 2005-06, Classical enrolled 87% minority students, which exceeded the limit at that time. But since the school was only in its 3rd year of operation, it was exempted from Sheff requirements, so its 316 Hartford minority students counted toward the settlement goal. However, in 2006-07, Classical entered into its 4th year of operation and was no longer exempt. Its minority enrollment stood at 83%, which exceeded the 74% limit, so none of its current 320 Hartford minority students may be counted toward the Sheff settlement goal. In order for Classical to have met the 74% limit this year (within its current total enrollment of 584 students), it would have needed to increase its white enrollment by 50 students (from 101 to 151) and decrease its minority enrollment by the same amount (from 483 to 433).

**Table 4: Interdistrict Magnets in Hartford area, by race, 2006-07**

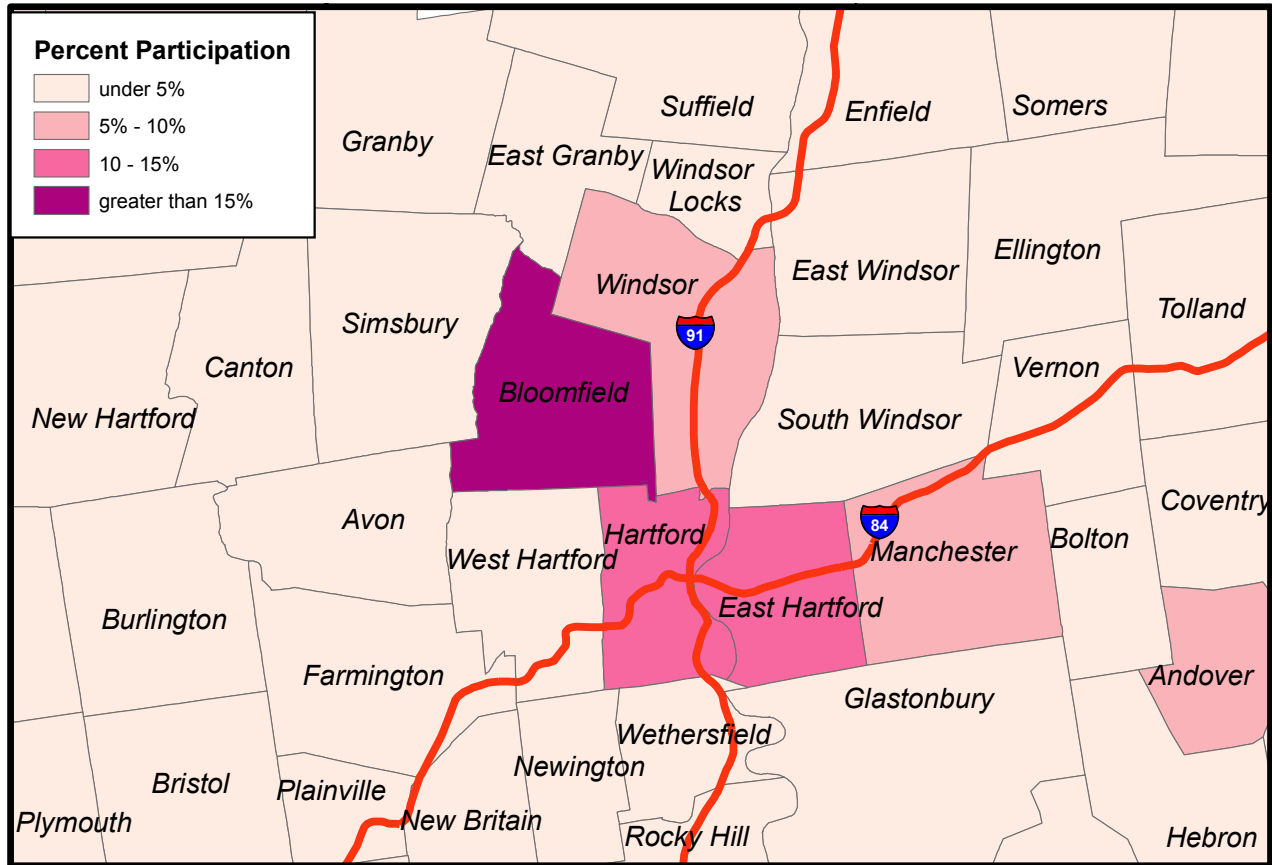
<b>Magnets</b>	<b>Percent Minority</b>	<b>Qualifies as Sheff Reduced Isolation?</b>	<b>Magnet Program Enrollment 2006-07</b>	<b>Hartford minority students meeting Sheff standard</b>
<b>Managed by CREC (Year opened)</b>				
GHAA - Greater Hartford Acad of Arts (1989)	26%	Yes	401	49
East Hartford/Glastonbury Elem Magnet (1992)	39%	Yes	255	0
GHAMAS - Grtr Hartford Acad Math & Sci (2000)	46%	Yes	233	51
Great Path Academy at Manchester CC (2002)	48%	Yes	89	13
Two Rivers Magnet Middle School (2002)	53%	Yes	608	141
UHMS - Univ of Hartford Magnet Sch (2001)	74%	Yes	379	193
Metropolitan Learning Center (1998)	75%	No*	681	0
Montessori Magnet School (1990)	78%	No*	330	0
<b>Managed by HPS</b>				
Breakthrough Magnet School (2002)	73%	Yes	306	163
HMMS - Hartford Magnet Middle School (2002)	74%	Yes	606	341
Sport & Medical Sciences Academy (2002)	78%	No*	402	0
University HS of Science and Engineering (2004)	81%	Yes**	320	200
Classical Magnet School (2003)	83%	No*	584	0
R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of the Arts (2006)	85%	Yes**	120	67
Capital Preparatory Magnet School (2005)	86%	Yes**	260	122
Noah Webster MicroSociety (2004)	86%	Yes**	402	240
Mary Hooker Environmental Studies (2006)	89%	Yes**	100	56
Pathways to Technology (2003)	89%	No*	300	0
Simpson-Waverly Classical Magnet (2004)	95%	Yes**	208	154
Annie Fisher Multiple Intelligences (2005)	96%	Yes**	271	194
<b>Managed by other districts</b>				
CT Intl Baccalureate Acad - East Hartford (1999)	54%	Yes	180	22
Big Picture High School - Bloomfield (2005)	80%	Yes**	60	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>7,095</b>	<b>2,006</b>
*Not meeting Sheff standard but receiving state funding because open prior to July '05 (CT Statute 10-264L)				
**Currently meets Sheff standard because magnet school is within 3rd year of operation				
<i>Source: CSDE PSIS, October 2006</i>				



# Which districts send students to magnet schools?

School district participation in magnet schools is nearly the opposite of Project Choice participation (compare with map 2). Districts sending the highest percentages of students to magnet schools are located closer to the City of Hartford. The Bloomfield School District has the highest rate, with 1 out of 5 students attending an inter-district magnet.

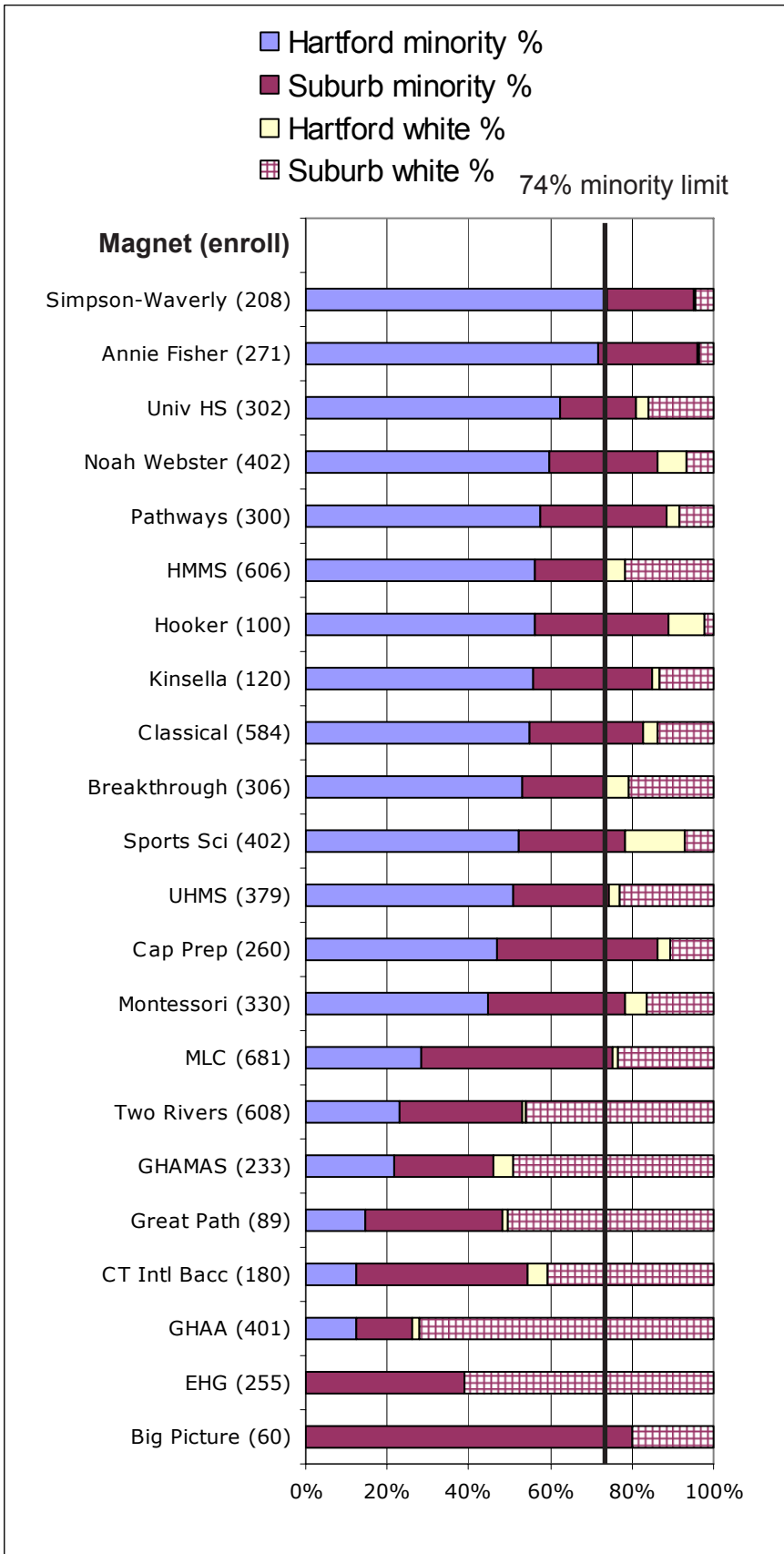
**Map 4 and Table 5: District Participation in Magnets, as percent of total enrollment, 2006-07**



District	Total District Enrollment	Students in Magnets	Percent Participation	District	Total District Enrollment	Students in Magnets	Percent Participation
Bloomfield	2239	470	21.0				
Hartford	22329	3310	14.8	South Windsor	5020	113	2.3
East Hartford	7636	768	10.1	New Britain	10940	206	1.9
Windsor	4132	384	9.3	Bolton	916	17	1.9
Andover	341	25	7.3	Simsbury	4992	75	1.5
Manchester	7082	390	5.5	West Hartford	10116	143	1.4
Windsor Locks	1908	88	4.6	Avon	3505	49	1.4
East Windsor	1516	58	3.8	Granby	2278	27	1.2
Glastonbury	6766	242	3.6	Canton	1729	18	1.0
Suffield	2592	88	3.4	Vernon	3782	38	1.0
Rocky Hill	2583	83	3.2	Note: Less than 1% participation in East Granby, Ellington, Farmington, Newington, and other districts.			
Wethersfield	3833	115	3.0	Source: CSDE, PSIS October 2006			

# Who enrolls in magnet schools?

**Chart 2: Magnet enrollment, by race and residency, 2006-07**



Magnet school enrollment patterns vary a great deal from school to school. At the two extremes, Simpson-Waverly enrolls the highest percentage of Hartford minority students (74%) and Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts enrolls the lowest (12%). Note that two magnet schools (East Hartford-Glastonbury and Big Picture) do not enroll any Hartford students.

To the surprise of some observers, out of all minority students in magnet schools, over 40% reside in suburban school districts.

Furthermore, in all magnet schools combined, the proportion of suburban white students (25%) is nearly equal to the proportion of suburban minority students (29%). Yet since fewer minority students live in the suburbs, they are enrolling in magnet schools at relatively higher rates than white families.

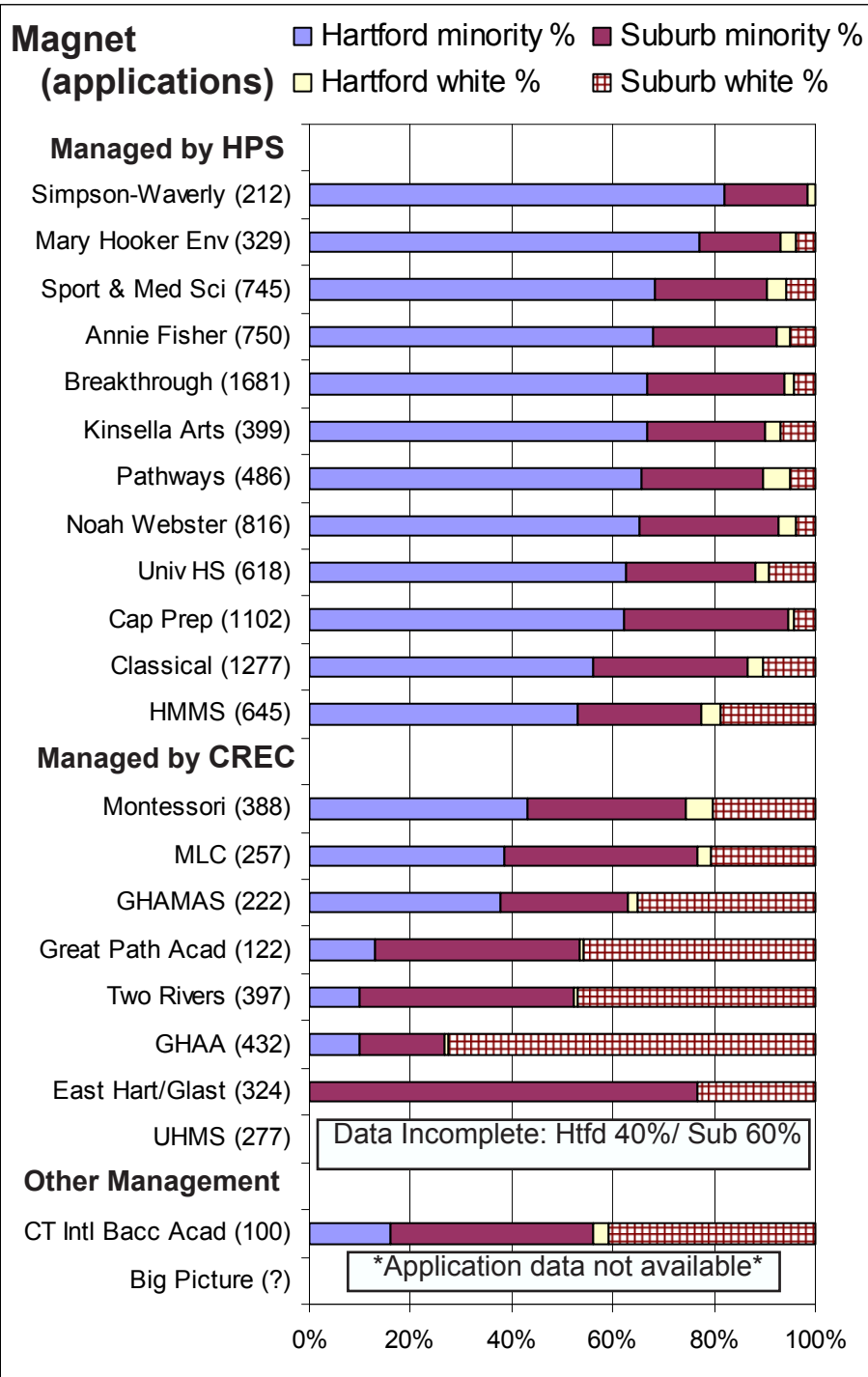
Note: The “suburban” label indicates students who reside outside of Hartford, but may also include the City of New Britain.

Note about racial classification: The Sheff settlement defines “minority” as Black and/or Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander. In March 2006, controversy arose regarding a magnet school principal who changed the designation of six bi-racial students from “Black” or “Hispanic” to “White,” in an attempt to meet racial limits. Unlike the U.S. Census Bureau, no multi-racial classification exists in the Sheff settlement, or the CT Department of Education datasets used in this report.

Source: *Hartford Courant* March 15, 2006

# Who applies to magnet schools?

**Chart 3: Magnet applications, by race and residency, 2006-07**



Magnet school application patterns also vary considerably from school to school. This chart presents application data in three sections (HPS magnets, CREC magnets, and other district magnets), since all have different marketing and application policies and practices.

At the two extremes, Simpson-Waverly received the highest percentage of applications from Hartford minority students (82%), while Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and Two Rivers tied for the lowest (10%). Regarding applications from white suburban students, Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts received the highest share (72%) and Simpson-Waverly the lowest (0%).

Note that two magnet schools (East Hartford-Glastonbury and Big Picture) do not enroll any Hartford students, and detailed application data was not available for Big Picture, Great Path Academy, Greater Hartford Academy of Math & Science, and University of Hartford Magnet School.

Furthermore, the magnet school receiving the highest total number of applications was Breakthrough, with 1,681. According to the spring 2007 lottery data we received, approximately 43 students (or 2.5% of those who applied) will attend Breakthrough in fall 2007. Another 235 names were removed from the Breakthrough application list because they were admitted to other magnet schools. As a result, nearly 1,400 students remain on Breakthrough's waiting list. Unfortunately, incomplete data prevented us from comparing acceptance rates and waiting lists across all magnet schools

Source: Spring 2007 magnet lottery data from CREC, HPS, and individual schools (CT International Baccalaureate Academy, Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts).

# How much progress on Sheff goal since last year?

Progress toward the Sheff goal over the past year has been very limited. In the Project Choice city-suburb transfer program, the total number of Hartford minority students enrolled increased by exactly 8 students (from 1,062 to 1,070). In addition, the total number of Hartford minority students enrolled in magnet schools meeting the Sheff standard (no more than 74% minority students) increased by 124 (from 1,882 to 2,006). Although more students are in magnet schools this year, some schools (such as Classical and Pathways) lost their exemption from the Sheff standard because they entered their fourth year of operation.

Together, the overall one-year progress yielded only 132 more students, which represents a small fraction (0.5%) of the total population of nearly 22,000 Hartford minority students.

**Table 6. Difference in Hartford Minority students in Project Choice**

District	05-06	06-07	Difference
<i>Inside Sheff region</i>			
Avon	37	41	4
Canton	45	39	-6
East Granby	24	20	-4
East Windsor	47	43	-4
Ellington	15	10	-5
Farmington	92	95	3
Glastonbury	44	42	-2
Granby	39	53	14
Newington	52	52	0
Rocky Hill	41	33	-8
Simsbury	100	96	-4
South Windsor	51	55	4
Suffield	21	23	2
Vernon	42	42	0
West Hartford	58	76	18
Wethersfield	13	13	0
Windsor	11	13	2
Windsor Locks	28	30	2
<i>Outside Sheff region</i>			
Berlin	10	14	4
Bolton	20	22	2
Bristol	43	36	-7
Cromwell	41	41	0
Enfield	82	78	-4
Plainville	63	58	-5
Reg. S.D. 10	11	8	-3
Somers	16	18	2
Southington	16	19	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>8</b>

Source: CSDE, PSIS Oct 2006 and Jan 2007 (updated 30 June 2007)

**Table 7: Difference in Hartford Minority students in Magnet Schools meeting Sheff standard**

Magnet School	05-06	06-07	Difference
Annie Fisher	94	194	100
Big Picture	0	0	0
Breakthrough	0	163	163
Cap Prep	85	122	37
CT Intl Bacc Acad	29	22	-7
East Hart/Glast	0	0	0
GHA	44	49	5
GHAMAS	42	51	9
Great Path Acad	12	13	1
Classical Magnet	316	0	-316
HMMS	338	341	3
Mary Hooker	NA	56	56
MLC	0	0	0
Montessori	0	0	0
Noah Webster	167	240	73
Pathways	170	0	-170
Kinsella Arts	NA	67	67
Simpson-Waverly	139	154	15
Sport & Med Sci	0	0	0
Two Rivers	128	141	13
UHMS	197	193	-4
Univ HS	121	200	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>1882</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>124</b>

Source: CSDE, PSIS October 2006

<p>Total Project Choice increase = 8                  + Total magnet school increase = 124                  -----                  Total progress over one year = 132                  (0.5% of all Hartford minority students)                  updated 30 June 2007</p>
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# Our failure to meet the Sheff goal

We have failed to meet the Sheff 2003 settlement goal of enrolling at least 30 percent of Hartford public school minority students in reduced isolation schools by June 2007. When we add up the totals of students below, the rate of legal compliance with Sheff has climbed from 10 percent (the official settlement estimate in 2002-03) to only 16.9 percent this year, far short of the targeted goal.

The numbers are more troubling when broken down into two categories: actual students versus legal compliance. For actual students in reduced isolation schools this year, we calculate the proportion enrolled in Project Choice (4.8 percent) and add it to those enrolled in magnet schools meeting the Sheff racial composition standard (4.4 percent). These figures are represented by the darker bottom layers of the columns in Chart 4. Together, only 9.2 percent of Hartford public school minority students are actually enrolled in reduced isolation schools. By contrast, the remaining students represent legal compliance with Sheff. In other words, 4.7 percent are in magnets exempted from Sheff standards due to the third-year of operation rule, and 3 percent comes from interdistrict cooperative grant spending levels (which are part-time programs, not full-time schools). As a result, the total 16.9 percent of legal compliance with Sheff is higher than the 9.2 percent of students who are actually enrolled in reduced isolation schools.

	Total Students	Percent toward Sheff Goal		
	2006-07	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
<b>Magnet schools</b>				
-- actually meeting Sheff standard ( $\leq 74\%$ )	973	2.0%	3.6%	4.4%
-- legally meeting Sheff standard ( $\leq 3$ rd yr)	1033	4.7%	4.9%	4.7%
-- not meeting Sheff standard	1043			
-- grade levels not phased in	1406			
Project Choice suburb transfers	1070	4.4%	4.8%	4.8%
Hartford neighborhood schools	16412			
<b>Total</b>	<b>21942</b>			
Interdistrict Cooperative Grants		2.2%	2.5%	3.0%
<b>Total Percent</b>		<b>13.3%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>

Source: CSDE

Why are we missing the goal? There are many factors, which we cannot begin to address in this brief report. But Connecticut needs to wake up to the facts: we have made limited progress toward meeting our legal requirements and addressing the needs of the children who deserve our greatest attention.

