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## Oral History Interview on Magnet School Policy

Joe Townsley

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## **Townsley, Joe**

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Consent form: TownsleyJoe\_consent20050218

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Transcribed by: Sara Dougherty, Erin Michelson

Additional files: n/a

Abstract: Joe Townley describes his role as the magnet school program administrator for the Capitol Region Educational Council (CREC), which operates several magnet schools in the Greater Hartford region. He describes marketing practices, the application process, and school theme specializations, with comparisons to magnets operated by the Hartford Public Schools. The interview also includes concerns by parents in suburban towns that do not participate in magnet school agreements, and state policies on magnet school tuition.

Additional comments: This interview was conducted as part of the Cities Suburbs and Schools seminar. Submitted as part of the [OnTheLine web-book](http://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu) by Jack Dougherty and colleagues (<http://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu>).

Speaker key:

SD: Sara Dougherty

EM: Erin Michelson

JD: Jack Dougherty [no relation to Sara]

JT: Joe Townsley

[all comments by transcriber in brackets]

PART 1 [transcribed by Sara Dougherty]

EM: To start off we just wanted to tell you that we understand that CREC has several Magnet Schools and we've looked at this website... and over the past few weeks in our class we have visited Magnet school open houses, the sessions at the Learning Corridor; and have interviewed perspective parents there. So our first question is what marketing methods does CREC use to reach out to prospective parents?

JT: There's one more...the Middle College Magnet School that we're building, Manchester Community College and we have 80 students in the program now, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, they graduate from high school, and they also receive up to in some cases 30 college credits. It's a really neat program, its called Middle College. You asked now, marketing? How do we market?

EM: Yes.

JT: We market in several different ways. First of all, because magnet schools are perceived by parents in this Greater Hartford area, particularly Hartford, as where they want their children, um, they market themselves, by just their *existence*. And we just get tons of calls about “when is the lottery”? We do other specific things, uh, that you know we ran a Fair, at Capitol Community College it was advertised throughout the Hartford region; and parents could come in, and they could shop. [They] in essence could come in and talk about their school. Um, we market them through what little bit of the public relations we do out of this department. So that hopefully people begin to realize that if there’s a Magnet school in their community that’s a plus. And secondly that it’s an option that parents have. Uh we market through direct mailing, I think that our website to some extent markets it. It is an interesting question because, are you familiar with the Magnet schools we run and the Host Magnet schools? There are really two kinds of Magnet schools that operate.

JD: That Hartford Public Schools.

JT: Hartford Public Schools.

JD: That’s the language that we have been using, okay?

JT: That’s right, The Hartford Public Schools and we actually manage one of theirs, but Ed Linehan, who I’m probably going to talk to at some point would argue that there’s not enough marketing and therefore only those parents who are savvy enough, eager enough, have transportation, speak English, are the ones that will avail themselves in the Magnet schools, therefore we are in essence discriminating against, all the other parents. So, therefore *his* marketing [unclear] strategy was to send a blanket letter out to every Hartford parent therefore hopefully leveling the playing field for participation. The Board of Ed, interestingly enough, I don’t know if you follow this at all, discussed, Hartford Board of Ed, a hole different non-marketing strategy, which is “we won’t market at all, we will simply place every child in a Magnet school by a lottery and draw them out and then they get right of refusal” so there is a...there is a conscious attempt to go out and market the Magnet schools on a regular basis, and one of the downsides of this is that, in our case, [we??] raise the expectations far beyond the ability to satisfy the demand; because in some cases I had 2,300 children on a waiting list that will never ever see a Magnet school.

EM: Along the lines of the marketing, we were wondering what you think is the most effective ways of marketing, and what you find is the least effective?

JT: Probably the most effective way is parent to parent. Parents talk about it, they influence other individuals to apply, uh the neighborhood that surrounds the Magnet school; Trinity Learning Corridor is a great example. They see it as a positive place for their children, its...its just, the physical presence markets itself. Um, I’ve only been here six months, so I don’t know if I can answer that. I have a lot of experience in marketing, because I do, in another lifetime I did a lot of that in a private sector. Um, in some cases the best marketing we do is when we have principals and other staff members go to a school and meet the parents. We do that for Great Path, for example, they go out, and they literally have an open house and they talk about that

Magnet school, and then the parents are invited over, and that one to one or an opportunity to go in and see the building and talk to other students is probably the best marketing we can do because it, it breaks down all the other stuff that gets between the potential client and which they are in that case and the people who are offering these services. Um, there is advertisements that are done on billboards, [unclear] just sitting there on buses. This is a really interesting question because we market out of this, we have a private sector component in this organization and I've asked that question over and over again "how do we know what we get for the dollars we spend?" and in a true marketing strategy you are building that into it so you can, you can in essence evaluate your end results but we don't do that here its kind of a shotgun approach.

EM: How would you compare the marketing of CREC to the marketing of the Hartford Public Schools?

JT: For Magnet schools?

EM: Yes, we have some information here that we [unclear].

JT: I think they're very similar. In terms of, if I grab off the things that we do here, I think that they are very similar in terms of the visual impact and what they, the information that they have in it what they do do is that they offer um, information, interesting marketing the date of this um, Magnet Fair, which advertised for the public the opportunity to come see the Magnet schools did NOT include any of our inter district Magnet schools. Was it omission, by Ed [Linehan], was it something Ed didn't want to have there? I don't know. But, the essence of the Magnet school marketing should have been you get an opportunity to see the Hartford Magnet schools and all the inter district Magnet schools. And that they were there, rightfully so, we built the room differently so that people could distinguish when they walk in to it, because, in inter district Magnet schools although, although all Hartford students may participate not all suburban parents may participate. But we do have people that are from the suburbs [unclear] we do not market well, nor at all practically, is to our suburbs. And the reason for that is that unless the school district is agreeing to pay the tuition um, we're going to fend the superintendent, Board of Education by coming into the community and having those parents so interested that they will then march on the Board of Ed and say why can't we get our kids in? So we have a fine line that we have to be very careful in terms of our marketing to those suburban districts part of the issue that you will probably hear about in the next year or two is that since we don't do [prop??] the kind of marketing we need to get the kind of results that we want that this whole area may go to an open choice one day. That simply says parents pick a school, go in the lottery, and go; does not take the support of the local Board of Education to pay that tuition. So, I don't, I don't know, how effective their Magnet school marketing is and I don't know at this moment how effective ours is and one of the reasons that I don't think that they have spent any time on it is number one we have no one here with any marketing experience, and number two if you're the only grocery store in town and everybody buys all their groceries there, the questions going to be why do you want to market because in this case, Joe, you are just raising the expectations of these parents, that are never going to get in. And there's some truth to that. It's a sad appearance when these parents come up and I know they are never going to get their child in that school.

SD: I have a question, from our other classmates have interviewed Magnet school parents during the... open houses, and we have heard various aspects of their... like what they find appealing the academic reputation, the racial diversity, the new facilities, and the special curricular themes. What aspects about the Magnet schools do you try to emphasize in your marketing- and do you have different ones?

JT: Well, first of all we have themes, that's number one, so you market that theme, if you're interested in science, that this, this is what this magnet school offers, and [if you're] interested in international studies that's what MLC offers. So the theme is [important??] to us. The second thing is we offer, to the marketing plan, is that opportunity for your children to be educated in a diverse environment. The suburbs certainly do not provide that diversity and therefore if your child is in one of our schools you're going to get quality education in a greater learning environment, and that's the second piece. The third piece and its, its interesting to me if you were sending a child to the Hartford Middle Magnet School which is a Hartford school which we manage, we talk about student performance. That's a thing we would market, that's the highest performing Hartford school that there is. So therefore we think that what we really need to market is that when a student attends one of the Magnet schools they will exceed or at least meet the performance levels of those students who are back in the sending schools. If you're coming from Glastonbury, [unclear] going to go to East Hartford/Glastonbury Elementary School your child will perform at the same level they would if it were back in Glastonbury. You need to market that, you need to market performance. And uh, our, I've been here six months, but I will tell you our performance is dismal in some of our cases, and we could do a lot better than what we're doing now. So we're going to focus on that in terms of, of a marketing piece. If you're going to GAMMAS, the expectation is you'll come out with a science experience that can't be matched at any other public school in the state and therefore if that's your level of interest and you have that skill our marketing strategy is that that will probably get you into a college of your choice quicker than anything else that we know. So, each one of them, you know, offer different incentives for parents or students to select that Magnet school, and to some extent that becomes the marketing piece. If you're the only performing arts academy, then uh, and uh seriously too that University of Hartford is building a new Magnet school which would be a Hartford Magnet school for science, and that would be an all day program, ours are only half-day programs. So we're now running focus groups to determine whether we're going to convert our half-day programs into full-day programs; and how would we market that. And our first session with all the people who have kids in the uh science academy are saying no; because we want our youngsters and our parents want theirs to be able to attend their local school and still participate in those local events, graduate from that school, and get that extra experience at that school in terms of science. So, if we were to make that conversion, and we will not, we would then market that school differently. The questions going to be, if we don't start drawing kids from Hartford, in the future and they all want to go to the all day program, we're going to have to re-strategize our marketing for our half-day program. And my best guess is that the Hartford students will select an all day program. This goes back to some of the things that parents want for their children. And one of those things is a safe learning environment, where they will get individual attention and it matches the theme of the school. I will tell you something I haven't heard in six months, in most cases parents in Hartford do not care one iota about the theme, that's a non-issue, I just know I want my kid in that school. And when the recent, annual yearly progress reports came out for the state to indicate which schools were in jeopardy, this phone did not stop

ringing. They didn't care what Magnet school, I just want my kid out of that school, and the No Child Left Behind act says I have choices now I want that choice. And we're saying I'm sorry, no, you have the lottery, the lottery next year but, so, so they in essence almost, almost market themselves in certain ways.

EM: The next question that we have is about the lottery, we were wondering if you see differences in the parental participation based on demographic groups?

JT: I'm not sure I can answer that for you, I will tell you that the suburban districts that have Board of Eds that allow them to participate in Magnet schools um, have a very high response rate. [I'll take] University of Hartford Magnet school which is a pre-school up through grades five, I know in my, when I was superintendent at Simsbury I had 85 families on the waiting list. That's a, that's a fairly significant number from one community, their never going to get in, because you grandfather the sibling, and that kind of thing. So, um, I think you'll find that in a suburban district, um, there is response to that, what we know about success in young people in school is related to the level of education of their parents, the income of their parents, that sends them off to school with an attitude about wanting to be successful and they speak English, and they attend English speaking schools. Lets flip that to an urban environment where you don't have those three factors you're not going to get the ability for those people to respond in the same way. They're just not. So, um, yeah, I think there is a significant difference in terms of, you know, how people respond to it, based upon where they live, the knowledge that they have – the access that they have to computers, the access they have and the ability to call up and say – I want information. I had someone in this morning, who was just, very angry because they couldn't get the answer out of one of the schools one of their children were in the lottery, and the last day for the lottery is today; and this woman knew enough to come up here, find our office, and talk to us about it. And yet when I met with parents on that Saturday, it was really very sad, in terms of the level of information people had. And they were there for the right reasons, they were there because they cared about their children. I had people come in who were mentors for children in foster programs, bringing those kids in, saying please, I – I want, I just, we cant get this child out of this school. And um, that's a commentary on how people view the Hartford Public Schools.

SD: Well, this question, we've kind of been talking about it, but we read this story this story from the *Hartford Courant*, from October 23, 2004, it reported concerns about the significant number of suburban minority families who are applying to Magnet schools, and how this affects racial balance and state funding. And we were going to ask if you share these concerns, and you do?

JT: I do, there, there are suburban districts where there was significant interest and participation in the lottery, and they got into those schools and almost all those children who entered, were African Americans. So you got, you got double issue here you've got why are they leaving that district in such numbers? And two it throws off the balance off in an urban Magnet school which is intended to attract white suburban students in, to keep that balance in line because when the balance changes it actually changes the funding [unclear] from the state. So uh, that is a significant concern.

PART 2 [transcribed by Erin Michelson]

EM: Our next question is about how are classmates had an interview with Ed Linehan and you touched on this a little bit earlier but he explained to them how the Hartford Public Schools were aggressively marketing towards the towns that are predominately white and our question was does CREC do the same?

JT: No, let me tell you why. If you are a suburban district, if you live in a suburban district, and you want to attend any of those Hartford Magnet schools then you get in. It does not need Board of Education approval because money is gonna flow with that youngster into that receiving school as well as you get 1,200 dollars for transportation. So its not...if I lived in Southington and I want my child to go and I put them in and they get pulled out, they are gone that's it end of story. Inter district magnet schools are different they are cooperative partnerships that exist between Hartford and a lot of other school districts. So go back to the University of Hartford Magnet school for example when that was being constructed a group of us got together and the superintendent along with five other schools...six other schools...we said yeah, we want to be partners with that school and we are going to send school and we are going to send kids there and so we became...we ran the governing board and we in essence were the governing agency of that, that school. And then I made a commitment to send twenty five kids to that school. Other districts couldn't send kids there, nor could they send more or less from the district that they were in unless the governing board agreed to make those changes. So I can't go out and market that school to Glastonbury because they are not going to get in and the reason for that is that [unclear] until the funding [unclear] until they change the change the funding formula which they are about to do this session and find a new way of giving sending districts an opportunity to not lose their money you're not going to find suburban districts willing to attend and the problem is that Avon only gets four hundred dollars per child from the state and they will get maybe 8,000 in Hartford and when a child leaves to go to a Choice Program Hartford gets to retain that money, well we always say let the money follow with that youngster when there is no money in the suburban districts to even let the kid take the money with them. I know this is complicated stuff but it alters the whole marketing strategy [unclear] In fact I get calls from superintendents that are angry because parents are coming to their board meetings saying "I want to be in that magnet school" and they say "Joe, what are you doing to promote this among these parents" and I say "I'm not doing anything to promote it" but "how would you like to be a partner with us?" And it's very difficult because local districts are in a bind in terms of how they operate and get money for their own school districts. It's just different.

JD: Could I just ask, just to make sure I get the terms clarified here

JT: Sure

JD: Cause I want to make sure that we can explain this to everybody when we get back, and I want to make sure I've been using the right terms. So the distinction you made is clearly between Hartford Host Inter district Magnet schools

JT: Right

JD: That's where the, if the student comes from a suburb

JT: They get in

JD: They get in, 2000 dollars plus transportation money

JT: Right

JD: Goes right with them. That distinctive versus CREC sponsored inter district magnet schools [unclear]

JT: Yeah, Great Path is an example. We've got seven school districts and if we want to send our kids there we are willing to pay this much tuition, we are involved in building this twenty five million dollar school and they are making a commitment to continue to send kids there for a long period of time and that tuition will go up slightly but tuition for all of these schools has maintained itself for years. They only pay on average 2600 dollars per child...Right over here to Two Rivers, a beautiful new school, that's just two towns they got together and said "You know what, rather than lets just go build schools, lets go get a magnet school and have the state pay for it." It's a middle school. And you send three hundred kids in East Hartford and Glastonbury and we'll send three hundred so we don't have to hire more teachers back there, we don't have to build on to that school and its just those two schools. So each school is set up differently is what it amounts to and what I'm working with now is this new planetarium we are going to build a science elementary school, with a planetarium, it's absolutely gorgeous, only elementary planetarium probably any where and its now East Hartford Glastonbury and we are going to add to that school Hartford students and then we are going to have another thirty to forty its going to be other and so we have had the meetings with school boards and said "Yeah that makes sense." We will go out and market them to Marlborough [?] and all the school districts out there and say "Do want to send kids here?" and I think that when they see it, they will want to. It's an extraordinary school. This is very complicated, I gotta tell ya, I was involved with magnet schools for thirteen years, the Learning Corridor, I was part of the groups that got together, how many years ago we put this concept together and we sold the concept and I came here and it's even more complicated than I ever imagined. The Montessori school which is located there is really complicated because the people who [unclear] get to send their children there and they don't pay the tuition. So I'm sitting here with a budget right now [unclear] its 400000 dollars in the whole for that one school. So we go back to look for [unclear]. See they are all different. When do I get to ask the questions?

SD: During our classmates interviews with perspective parents we heard from some white suburban parents that they've had difficulty finding information about magnet schools. Can you tell us more about how the marketing process is supposed to work in suburban districts?

JT: Well, I think that's just what we talked about a little bit. It really, there isn't, I'll take GHAMAS as an example, we do go out...

JD: You know what the acronym means

JT: I'm sorry, it's the Greater Academy for Math and Science...I haven't learned all these acronyms yet, they just fly by me sometimes and I have no idea what they are talking about. We

do market that one for example. We set up dates and we go to every eighth grade class and there are parents and we invite them in and they get to hear about this. And where do we go? We go to those who are the school districts that are willing to say we are going to send some kids there. Because you can't write a check and get in there. Now, do we go out and do we market to [unclear]. Yes, I'm marketing right now in Coventry, East Granby, Canton, Enfield and a few others to say "Hey, wouldn't you like to be involved in magnet schools?" But I can't go out to those [unclear] parents in East Granby and set up a meeting and send a principal out there because they are not participants and that will breakup all my relationships I have with the superintendents. Second part is, and I'll give you an example, in Bloomfield we have the Metropolitan Learning Center, that just got chosen for the number one inter-district school in America, it just got a big award in Washington, but because it's in Bloomfield there's a sense that, and students from Bloomfield want to go there, that we are drawing off the very best, that we are creaming it out, and so there is some real hard [unclear]. My first week on the job I went out to meet the superintendent and I said "You're mad at us aren't you?" She said, "You are damn right I am. You take our teachers, you take our kids." And so we had this discussion about what we can do to help him as a superintendent to convey within the community that that's really an asset in the community cause we are going to do some long distance learning. Our high school students had an hour and a half with teenagers from Iraq just before the war to talk about what this meant. We have kids right now off in Egypt, Japan, Costa Rica, Paris, so what we try and say is how can we help the [unclear] in public schools to see this as an asset? So it is very, it's a fine line in terms of how you market something into other school districts if they are non participants. And you may have read the paper, but there is a Mrs. O'Brien that caught everybody's attention. She started with us and she has been up to the state department [unclear] of government.

JD: She's from South Windsor

JT: South Windsor, correct. And her argument is I live in South Windsor, I want my child to go to a science academy, South Windsor does not participate and there is an extra space over there for that youngster. And we are saying, we cannot give you that space, because the risk is somewhat more complicated. You can't write a check for your child to attend any magnet school with the exception at the Learning Corridor the School of Performing Arts and it was grandfathered, it was grandfathered because it had been there for years and it's a half day program. So parents in any town can go into a lottery and the town says, I'll give you an example, Simsbury says we'll pay for eight places. They go out and audition, they pick the top eight. The next eight are told if you want to go you write the check for 3600 dollars and your child can come. So what's happening in that school is they are taking in revenue probably 350,000 dollars at this point to offset their cost but what is happening to that school is it's becoming more of a white suburban school then it is a mix of schools. So my job is to make sure that equity balance is still there cause that is an important part of why we have these magnet schools. So we don't market that school dramatically but we make people aware of it and there is open houses and they go out and talk with them, but it's a very, um, its ... we are a quasi public, quasi private organization. We have 1200 employees with a million point five square feet of buildings that we own, operate to and manage to different degrees. We actually own Metropolitan Learning Center that's, we went for state grant and that ours. And we are constantly stretching out; in fact we may be involved in the management of some public schools

before this next year is out. The marketing of what we do is um, itsits very sensitive in terms of how you do it because you can't offend. You know, because we, we, those superintendents basically who I represent in the best interests of what they need, you just can't offend them. Very different.

JD: I think my students have gotten through most of their questions. I just want to clarify; I'm always trying to clarify

JT: Absolutely

JD: I'm always trying to get my terms straight here. It is probably, I should be using the term "the lotteries" in plural form rather than singular form

JT: Yeah

JD: Because, let me try to explain it, see if I got it correct...many parents from many different communities are applying to, putting them into what they say is the lottery, but really when the lottery is processed if there is a CREC sponsored magnet school that has say six participating districts its really six simultaneous lotteries each districts has a set number of seats, they are just figuring out which of their town residents are getting in

JT: When um they run a lottery at the University of Hartford magnet school they are only accepting from those districts that are participating and that's their lottery it's overseen and supervised but it's an individual lottery. Um, when the host magnet school runs their lottery it's really just like any other host magnet school and Ed's gonna run that this year for the first time

JD: This is the Hartford magnet school

JT: The Hartford magnet school and so they'll pull that out. Now what's interesting is that we have agreed, this gets really complicated, we have agreed this year that anybody who has a child in any of the suburbs can also place their name into it. And lo and behold I found out yesterday that Enfield has passed board policy that says that o.k. they have strict guide lines we will let some people go into the lottery and we will make the decision in May if they meet the following criteria and one of the criteria is where you in a magnet school before cause I've got kids in an elementary school that say Montessori and they want to go over there [unclear]. And I've got some in the Middle magnet that want to get themselves into GHAMAS so their criteria is very specific and it's very unusual to have that criteria. I've never seen it before but I think they have gotten, but part of the problem of this whole thing is that, let me keep this real simple, there is a town lets take for example South Windsor, their tuition cost every year is about 300000 dollars so they are sending these kids all over. Every local district goes through ways to raise their own budget for their public school system and many of them are cut over and over and over. And I have experienced this and what happens is that you are a parent there and you find out that your music program in South Windsor is going to be eliminated or your program in Glastonbury, you have to start paying 300 dollars for every sport your child plays and then you say wait a minute your taking 300,000 dollars of my tax dollars to send out a small group of kids to very specialized great schools, it makes no sense. So the superintendent is always caught in this yin

yang thing of trying to stay within what we want to do in terms of our magnet schools and yet keep the home folks happy and not getting their programs slashed. So everyone is stuck in this middle and that's why we have to go back to look at how we fund this whole magnet school concept. But I think over time we will find a better way to do it.

JD: That was my last just background question here was you mentioned that in the state legislature there might be a bill this year [unclear]

JT: Yeah we work really close with OPM [State of Connecticut, Office of Policy Management] which is [unclear] where the decisions are made. Right now, I'll tell you what they have offered up is that rather than the state giving 5,325 dollars for every magnet school student that's where the money goes it comes to us we manage that budget. So I have 2,980 kids and I have millions of dollars and I have to make sure that at the end of the year my budget I don't spend more that I have. That's part of the problem.

JD: It costs about 8 to 9,000 dollars per kid in school

JT: Absolutely. So what happens is that we get 5,325 dollars for each child to come through there. They are now going to raise that, that's next years proposal to raise it next year to 6,200 and the following year 6,500 and there is another piece of legislation which we argued for is that every time a Hartford youngster goes out to the suburbs they take, that suburb gets 2,000 dollars for each child [unclear]. And what many people do, it gets complicated, they get the money for the Choice kids coming to Glastonbury and say well that's 80,000 dollars, and we take that 80,000 dollars and I'm going to send my Glastonbury kids to those host schools. And so they are now going to, the proposal is to raise that from 2,000 to 3,000 and what I have now is a complete print out of, I know how much each school district is going to be in the whole or gain as a result of this new legislation so I can say to the superintendent your tuition is going to go up because your cost is going to be this and a place like Hartford over there they are going to lose 1.6 million dollars out of this business so that's a struggle for Hartford. So when you guys finish your degrees you come down here and work with me and we are going to sort this thing out alright, cause you are going to be, you know what, you probably have as a result of what you are doing more knowledge than 99 percent of all the parents, more knowledge than probably most teachers have about magnet schools and how they function. It is kinda unique and a little fun if you think about a school system you went to Meriden?

EM: Meriden

JT: Meriden public schools, there is one high school or two?

EM: Two

JT: There's a middle school, special ed department, basketball teams and there's your budget and I know everything about Meriden its right here. The thing about this, this one is kind of exciting; a group of people get together and say lets start a magnet school alright lets do that. What are we going to call it; ok the theme is going to be Winter Wonderland whatever its going to be. We go to the state and they love the idea. They give us 28 million dollars to go build a

school and hire these people and buy the text books and the list just goes on and on and on. So you have these principals of people that built these schools almost over night. And we say we are running these schools its like building an airplane and flying it at the same time. And what's happens now is that we have all these schools that are uniquely different in so many ways so I come on board and they are really really different, and my job is to make a school system out of this. Create continuity while not having them give up what's important to them in terms of their theme. But there are major imbalances in terms of the money they have, what they have. I don't get involved in their schedules, but the Middle College, they run on a college schedule that's when they are in session, so it doesn't make a difference if they are from Manchester and Manchester is closed next year those kids are all in school. Then they have three weeks of intersession when they come in, they have internships and other places run on other schedules. So they are all unique and they all grew, all have grass roots. You know what a charter school is? It strictly means that you and I we want to start a school and we need a license or a charter and we can get that license in two ways. We live in your town, we go to the Meriden Board of Ed and we make our proposal, we want to build it in Meriden and we are going to call it whatever it is and they license us to do it. And we advertise and we get money from the state and we get money from the town because they are a charter school, and that becomes a charter school. And they build those and run them all at the same time. So in addition to all these choices, always have to think about other choices. They have choices for magnet schools, um uh charter schools which we have in Hartford, also have choices for vocational schools, a whole series of choices. So charter schools in many states have really grown up and abused dramatically. Arizona was just awful, everybody got charter schools and they are running them out of the garage, the basements, they are stealing all the money. This state was very select and said look if you are going to get a license you need to get it through town or come to the state department to get it. And Jumoke Academy down the road which is a charter school, when I [unclear] I think I think [unclear] cause people abused them.

JD: Well two of the charter schools just transformed into magnet schools, you touched on that, Breakthrough Charter and Sports and Science Academy

JT: That's right

JD: And funding has driven a lot of that. Funding drives a lot of the differences between the Hartford host system and the CREC system as you've explained

JT: It does, it really does. And you know what, these are all, we are all in transition here. I will bet that within the next ten years all the discussions we've had about money and to some extent a lot of it will begin to disappear and there will be an open choice. If you live in Glastonbury right now you can move to any of those host magnet schools now, no questions asked. I think the flipped side is going to say inter district schools that are being built where you live, you put your name in the lottery, we are going to take out 70 percent or 50 percent Hartford, and we are going to take out 50 percent out of the suburbs. They will just pull them out and funding is going to go with that kid. This is way too complicated. It's also always under funded. We get our money and we go back to the state for supplemental funding, we got it again this year but, Bruce Douglas that's the director, that's what he does that's his time in the legislative offices, he's there now that's all he does basically is try to make sure we have money to keep operating.

