



SHEFF MOVEMENT COALITION LEGISLATIVE AND ADVOCACY AGENDA 2014

1. Support full funding for implementation of the December 2013 Sheff v. O’Neill agreement.*
2. Prevent repeal of Connecticut General Statute §10-226h: This statutory provision, adopted in response to the Sheff v. O’Neill decision in 1997, requires local districts to report every two years on their efforts to promote diversity in their schools and to provide “evidence of the progress over time in the reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation,” and it requires the state to report to the Governor and General Assembly on state and local progress in addressing racial and economic isolation. Its repeal has been included in the “minor statutory revisions” submission by the State Board of Education, and should be removed immediately.*
3. Lift the “moratorium” on interdistrict magnet school development outside of the Hartford region: At the height of the state’s fiscal crisis in 2009, the legislature passed a temporary moratorium on development of interdistrict magnet schools *outside* of the Hartford area. The Sheff mandate to reduce racial isolation applies throughout the state, even though the specific court orders in the case apply only to the Hartford region. There is no excuse for the state to continue this moratorium in other highly segregated areas of the state.*
4. Support creation of dual-language immersion magnet schools in the Sheff region: In April 2013, the Sheff Movement co-sponsored a forum on two-way dual-language immersion schools that revealed significant interest in bringing this highly successful model to the Hartford region. Studies indicate the dual-immersion model is strongly associated with closing the achievement gap between native and non-native English speakers.
5. The state should continue to cover the costs of pre-K magnet school tuition. There is no justification to bill sending towns for pre-K tuition if they do not provide it to their own residents.*
6. Opening up additional Open Choice seats: At a minimum, the Commissioner of Education should be directed to undertake a comprehensive capacity study of Open Choice eligible suburban districts to ascertain how many additional Open Choice students could be accommodated. The Commissioner should also be given the authority to require

districts to take a reasonable additional number of Open Choice students consistent with local capacity.*

7. Align school construction spending with school integration goals: Significant school construction commitments are being considered in a number of Hartford area districts. State school construction funds should be prioritized for schools that will help to reduce racial isolation and promote diversity. The state should also work with suburban districts considering school closing and consolidation to find interdistrict solutions to advance Sheff goals.

8. Improve rates of inclusion in regional magnet schools: Each regional magnet school should be reviewed to ensure that its Hartford resident student population reasonably reflects the income and special needs profile of Hartford students overall; to the extent that it does not, remedial steps should be put in place to improve rates of access by low income families and children with special needs. Such steps may include affirmative recruitment efforts by the Hartford Public Schools and community partners.

9: Develop innovative policy solutions that link state housing and education policy: Improved collaboration between the state housing and education departments could include, for example, enhanced community development and home ownership efforts in urban magnet school neighborhoods and targeting state Section 8 and RAP vouchers to encourage family moves to high performing school districts.

(means item would require some legislative action)*

The Sheff Movement coalition works to educate parents and concerned residents about Connecticut's successful voluntary two-way interdistrict school integration programs and to promote improvement and expansion of these programs. Our goal is to promote quality, integrated education for all children. To see a full list of our 2014 legislative and advocacy goals, go to www.sheffmovement.org.