

Filed in 1989, *Sheff v. O’Neill* seeks to address the pervasive racial and economic segregation and inequality that existed between city and suburban schools in the Hartford region. In 1996, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that this inequality violated the Connecticut State Constitution. A series of agreements in the case have led to Sheff-related integration programs that allow students to apply to attend quality, integrated Interdistrict Magnet Schools or the Open Choice program, which lets Hartford students transfer to suburban schools. The plaintiffs (Black, Latinx, and white students and their parents from Hartford and the suburbs) and the defendants (Connecticut State officials) have reached a new agreement in the ongoing Sheff litigation that will last until June 30, 2022.

**The new agreement includes:**

## Summary of New *Sheff v. O’Neill* Agreement

### I. SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION OF THE SHEFF VOLUNTARY INTER-DISTRICT PROGRAMS

- a. Up to 1,052 new Magnet seats (with nearly 600 seats reserved for Hartford students.)
- b. \$1,100,000 in funding for new school themes to attract students and increase applications at certain Magnet schools.
- c. \$190,000 to support the achievement of Open Choice students.
- d. \$300,000 for suburban districts that increase the number of Open Choice seats for Hartford students by 20%.
- e. \$800,000 over two years for educational advocates to support Open Choice students.

### II. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION WITHIN THE CHOICE SYSTEM

- a. A commitment to measurable racial diversity in magnet schools.
- b. Corrective Action Plans for schools that are not meeting the diversity goals.
- c. A new lottery assignment system that ensures that magnet schools are socioeconomically diverse.
- d. State officials will work with Open Choice schools to develop a “statement of principles” defining their mission and commitments going forward.

### III. TRANSPARENCY & ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION TO HELP FAMILIES MAKE CHOICES

- a. Publicly available data, broken down by Hartford and suburban students, to understand the experiences of all students in the Sheff Voluntary Inter-district Programs and help address any inequalities within the programs.
- b. A campaign to inform and recruit underrepresented populations to Sheff programs and help with lottery applications.
- c. Moving the parent information center to a more accessible location.
- d. Real time application information offered through a simplified application system.

### IV. LONG-TERM REGIONAL PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

- a. An Advisory Committee, informed by input from the community, will review Sheff programs and make recommendations for their improvement.
- b. Connecticut is required to develop a long-term plan to ensure the sustainability of the Sheff Voluntary Inter-district Programs, including strategies to provide a seat for every student who applies through the lottery, to increase teacher diversity, and to address racial disparities in student discipline and academic achievement.