

**Magnet Schools in New Haven**  
**A Brief Report Prepared for**  
**The Finance Committee, New Haven Board of Aldermen**  
**May 2007**

New Haven Public Schools is widely recognized in Connecticut and across the nation as one of the leading districts in the area of public school choice. Our parents and students have the opportunity to apply to magnet schools, suburban magnet schools managed by Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), charter schools, vocational technical and vocational agricultural schools, suburban elementary and high schools through the Open Choice program, and of course their neighborhood schools. The keystone to this array of options is New Haven’s own magnet schools.

New Haven has twenty-one (21) magnet schools:

<b>Cooperative Arts &amp; Humanities HS</b>	<b>High School in the Community</b>	<b>Hill Regional / Career HS</b>
<b>Hyde Leadership Academy HS</b>	<b>Metropolitan Business Academy HS</b>	<b>New Haven Academy HS</b>
<i>Riverside Academy HS</i>	<b>The Sound School*</b>	<b>Betsy Ross Arts Magnet MS</b>
<b>Sheridan Technology Magnet</b>	<b>Barnard Environmental Studies</b>	<i>Conte / West Hills Magnet School</i>
<b>Davis Street Arts &amp; Academic Magnet</b>	<i>East Rock Global Studies Magnet</i>	<i>Edgewood Magnet School</i>
<b>Jepson Non-Graded Magnet School</b>	<b>King / Robinson IB Magnet School</b>	<i>John Martinez Magnet School</i>
<b>Mauro Math, Science &amp; Technology Magnet</b>	<b>MicroSociety Magnet School</b>	<i>Troup Magnet Academy</i>

\*The Sound School is technically not a magnet school, but operates much like a magnet school.

These 21 schools represent half of the schools in the New Haven Public School district. Collectively, during the 2006-2007 school year, they enrolled approximately 7,200 students representing 35.1% of the district. As a number of these schools move into new or renovated facilities their enrollments will increase. It is projected that these schools will serve over 10,300 students or approximately half of the students in the district when completed.

Fifteen (15) of these schools are “interdistrict.” They are indicated on the chart in Bold letters. Currently twenty-eight percent (28%) of the students enrolled are from suburban school districts. Tuition for these students is provided by the State Department of Education. An additional transportation grant is provided for these students. New or renovated interdistrict magnet school facilities are funded by the state legislature at either a 100% or 95% rate that is significantly higher than the rate for other school projects in the district. These new facilities have also made it possible to serve more New Haven students than previously being served in their original older, smaller and less well equipped buildings.

## **What is a Magnet School?**

A magnet is a publicly funded school made available to parents and students as an educational option. A magnet school has a specialized academic focus and/or instructional program that serves as the “magnet” to attract interested families. Magnet schools have two primary goals:

1. To increase the racial, ethnic and economic diversity of the students enrolled and by doing so to better prepare them to live in a diverse community, participate in a diverse workforce and in the global economy; and,
2. To improve the academic achievement of all students.

## How successful have New Haven’s magnet schools been in achieving these two goals?

### Diversity – Indicators of Success

The most recent enrollment for the New Haven Public Schools as audited by the State Department of Education is for the 2005-2006 school year. While the district as a whole was reported as 89% Minority and 11% White, the district’s twenty-one magnet schools are considerably more diverse. The subset of fifteen interdistrict schools is even more successful in providing students with a more diverse learning environment.

#### **Comparison of Diversity of New Haven’s Magnet Schools to School District 2005 – 2006 School Year**

	<b>Percent Minority</b>	<b>Percent Majority</b>
<b>District Totals</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>21 Magnet Schools</b>	<b>83.5%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>
<b>15 “Interdistrict” Schools</b>	<b>79.4%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>

In general the schools that have been regionalized for more then ten years are further along in their diversity efforts:

High School in the Community	70.1% Minority / 29.1% White
Cooperative Arts and Humanities	71.3% Minority / 28.7% White
The Sound School	34.6% Minority / 65.4% White
Betsy Ross Arts Magnet Middle	77.7% Minority / 22.3% White
Benjamin Jepson Non-Graded Magnet	79.5% Minority / 20.5% White

This year’s recruitment effort of suburban students to the interdistrict magnet schools was dramatically more successful in achieving the diversity goals of the magnet program with the total number of suburban applications increased by 44.1%, growing from 927 to 1,386. The number of white suburban students placed nearly doubled from 193 to 382 students. Nearly 92% of all New Haven applicants placed in requested schools were minority students. (See New Haven Register article attached)

**Academic Achievement – Indicators of Success**

While there has not been a comprehensive evaluation of both the interdistrict and the district only magnet schools there are many indicators of academic achievement and attainment.

**No Child Left Behind – “Adequate Yearly Progress”**

New Haven’s magnet school compare favorably to all other district schools in the most recent assessment reports provide by the Connecticut State Department of Education. This is true in both Mathematics and Reading areas:

	Mathematics % Making AYP	Reading % Making AYP
21 Magnet Schools	47.6%	47.6%
21 Non-Magnet Schools	23.8%	19.0%

Two magnet schools are particularly noteworthy because they were state identified low performing schools before they became magnet schools.

**Vincent Mauro School** became an interdistrict magnet school in 2001 selecting Math, Science and Technology as its magnet focus. In the 2006 testing cycle the school achieved Adequate Yearly Progress for the first time. The percent of students achieving proficiency in Mathematics increased from 55% to 71% over the previous year. The gains in Reading were from 35% to 45%. If the Vincent Mauro Magnet School repeats this success in the 2007 round of testing they will no longer be listed as a school in need of improvement.

**King / Robinson School** became an interdistrict magnet school in 2004 selecting the academically rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) program as its magnet focus. The school, originally a middle school and now PreK-8, has been identified by the State as in need of improvement for six years. The 2006 testing cycle indicated dramatic improvement. The percent of students achieving proficiency in Mathematics increased from 36% to 63% over the previous year. The gains in Reading were from 28% to 47%. If the King / Robinson Magnet School continues this rate of improvement in the 2007 round of testing they are likely to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress.

Additionally, the King / Robinson Magnet school recently received Middle School Certification from the international IB organization. The first middle school aged program in Connecticut to receive this designation. The elementary portion of the school will submit for this recognition next year

**Interdistrict Magnet Schools and Magnet Programs in Connecticut:**  
**An Evaluation Report - March 2003**

The Connecticut State Department of Education has conducted only one formal evaluation of the state-wide interdistrict magnet program. At the time of the report in 2003 the only magnet high schools in the state that had been in operation for four or more years were all located in New Haven. The high school section of the report focused on those New Haven magnet high schools. Here are a number of the key findings of the report:

- The New Haven resident students attending these schools were typical of the entire high school population of the district. They were not a “creamed” population of students.
- The magnet school students did not achieve significantly different than their peers in the home district schools on the CAPT test administered in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. However there was at least a 19% higher test participation rate in the magnet schools.
- The four-year cumulative dropout rate was significantly **lower** in the magnet high schools than other district high schools, suburban feeder high schools and state wide averages.
- The percentage of 2001 Graduates Completing Algebra, Chemistry, or three years of World Language was significantly **higher** in the magnet high schools than other district high schools, suburban feeder high schools and in most state wide averages.

- The percentage of 2001 Graduates Participation in AP and College Credit Courses was significantly **higher** in the magnet high schools than other district high schools and suburban feeder high schools.
- The percentage of 2001 Graduates Attending Four Year Colleges was significantly **higher** in the magnet high schools than other district high schools, suburban feeder high schools and state wide averages.

There were many other positive findings that include elementary and middle school magnets from across the state. The Executive Summary of the report is attached here and the entire 300 page report can be found on the Connecticut State Department of Education website: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde>.

### **State Strategic School Profile & NCLB Report Data: 2005 – 2006**

The State Department of Education annually provides a summary of information on every public school in Connecticut in a Strategic School Profile Report and a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) School Report. The 2005 – 2006 reports provide the most recent information. The interdistrict magnet schools in every case outperform both of the comprehensive high schools on the Reading and Mathematics sections of the CAPT test given to tenth grade students. With respect to graduation, most of the magnet high schools require more credit to graduate. They have a four year cumulative dropout rate of 7.5%, which is one-third the dropout rate for the comprehensive high schools of 20.5%. While the magnet high schools have about the same average number of graduates who continue on to higher education as in the comprehensive schools, the magnet schools have many more students make it to

graduation. These smaller magnet schools have clearly made a difference in the academic lives of New Haven students as illustrated in the charts below:

### New Haven Comprehensive High Schools

State CAPT Tests

Percent At or Above Proficient

Graduation Information

	Reading	Math		Credits for Graduation	4 Year Dropout Rate	Attending 2 or 4 Year College
<b>Wilbur Cross High School</b> 2005 Enrollment - 1,814 students	<b>47%</b>	<b>39%</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>77.9%</b>
<b>James Hillhouse High School</b> 2005 Enrollment - 1,222 students	<b>38%</b>	<b>30%</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>83.7%</b>

### New Haven Interdistrict High Schools

State CAPT Tests

Percent At or Above Proficient

Graduation Information

	Reading	Math		Credits for Graduation	4 Year Dropout Rate	Attending 2 or 4 Year College
<b>Cooperative Arts &amp; Humanities</b> 2005 Enrollment - 400 students	<b>72%</b>	<b>55%</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>75.7%</b>
<b>High School in the Community</b> 2005 Enrollment - 323 students	<b>72%</b>	<b>53%</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>77.9%</b>
<b>Hill Regional / Career</b> 2005 Enrollment - 709 students	<b>79%</b>	<b>69%</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>96.1%</b>
<b>Hyde Leadership School</b> 2005 Enrollment - 203 students	<b>58%</b>	<b>44%</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>78.3%</b>
<b>Metropolitan Business Acad.</b> 2005 Enrollment - 173 students	<b>83%</b>	<b>54%</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>New School</b>	<b>New School</b>
<b>New Haven Academy</b> 2005 Enrollment - 145 students	<b>59%</b>	<b>40%</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>New School</b>	<b>New School</b>