2012 Program Report Card: Interdistrict Magnet School Program (Connecticut State Department of Education)

Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut students have a successful transition to adulthood, assume a contributing role in a world-class workforce, and become productive members of their community and society at large.

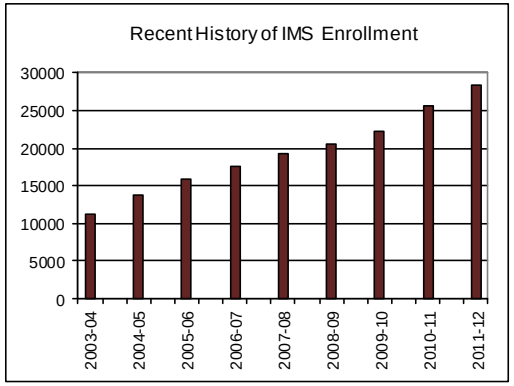
Contribution to Result: Interdistrict Magnet Schools (IMSs) are one of the public school choice options that are raising the educational attainment level of participating students throughout the state through high-quality, racially/economically integrated education. They provide educational choices that contribute to a more highly educated workforce and reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation. IMSs maximize the opportunity for each student to achieve his or her highest potential by offering challenging, relevant and rigorous curriculum and instruction. In addition, these programs provide a creative and flexible environment that values each student's unique abilities, talents, interests and learning styles. Greater student learning and engagement in school lead directly to a more prosperous adulthood with greater contributions to the economy and society.

Program Expenditures	State Funding	Federal Funding	Other Funding	Total Funding
Actual FY 11	$183,616,773		Not Applicable	$183,616,773
Estimated FY 12	$215,855,338		Not Applicable	$215,855,338

Partners: Institutions of higher education, business and industry, theme-specific associations/groups, educational researchers and parents.

How Much Did We Do?

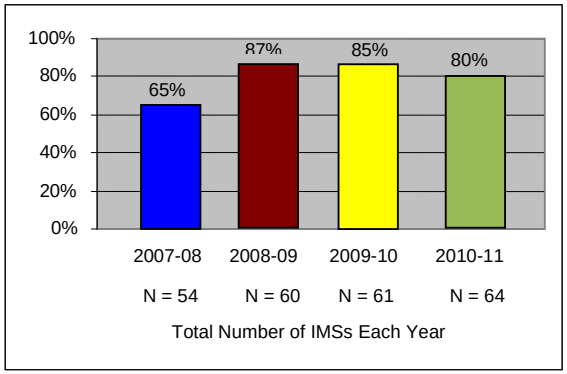
Number of students enrolled in IMSs



Story behind the baseline: IMS enrollment has grown nearly 150% in the past eight years, growing from 11,324 in 2003-04 to an estimated 28,300 in 2011-12. This has afforded more students the experience of learning in a more racially/economically integrated setting. Since its inception as a funded program in 1995-96 with 8 schools and 1522 students, the rate of enrollment growth has been consistent resulting in 66 IMSs by 2011-12. The superior academic achievement of IMSs revealed in the *Better off Measure* continues to positively impact the achievement of more students, and results in increasing demand for IMSs. In order to stay in compliance with the provisions of the *Sheff* court settlement, the number of students participating in Hartford-area IMSs must continue to grow.
Trend: ▲

How Well Did We Do It?

Number and percentage of IMSs meeting statutory racial isolation target of at least 20% white students.



Story behind the baseline: The percentage of IMSs meeting the standard (at least 20% white) had continually grown through 2009-10, peaking at 87%, up from 65% two years earlier. 2010-11 had fallen to 80%. While approximately 40% of the schools previously meeting the standard were only *marginally* above it, the reduction to 80% may be a result in a data definition change in the race designations for 10-11. 2011 legislation gave the CSDE two years to establish new race targets based on the new race designations and further analysis of the impact of the definitional changes to the race data. The number of IMSs increased from 54 to 64 between 2007-08 and 2010-11, and has increased to 66 in 2011-12, although the enrollment and racial composition was not known as of the production of this report.
Trend: ◄►

How Well Did We Do It?

Percentage of high school students attending and staying in school in IMSs and the city public high schools.

Attendance Rate of City Resident Students

	Non-Magnet High Schools			Magnet High Schools		
	2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Hartford	79.7	81.5	82.2	95.1	94.5	91.5
New Haven	84.8	85.5	88.4	90.9	91.2	91.3
Waterbury	92.2	92.4	91.8	93.8	94.6	93.6
# Schools	13	13	13	21	23	24

Story behind the baseline: IMSs typically expect that a combination of theme-based curricula and smaller class sizes will ensure that students will stay engaged in their education. Attendance rates reflect the average percentage of days students attend school. When comparing "like-students," IMS city resident students attend school at a higher rate than students in the city public high schools. The difference between IMS students and their city public school peers in the *Sheff* region is particularly stark. Student engagement in IMSs is reinforced by the fact that their 2009-10 annual dropout rate of 0.7% was nearly one-third of the 2.1% statewide and nearly one-fifth of the dropout rate across the three cities' public high schools
Trend: ▲

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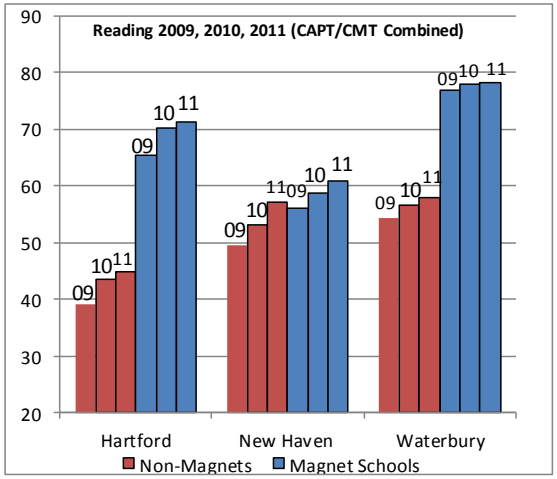
Is Anyone Better Off?

Percentage of Hartford, New Haven and Waterbury resident students at or above proficiency in reading in both IMSs and the city public schools (non-magnets).

Tested in Reading (2009, 2010, 2011 CMT/ CAPT)

	Hartford	New Haven	Waterbury
Magnet '09	1955	2216	628
Non-magnet '09	7559	5443	7694
Magnet '10	1886	2349	622
Non-magnet '10	7009	4995	7546
Magnet '11	2093	2407	644
Non-magnet '11	6310	4866	7145



Note: These data reflect students in *tested* grades only (Grades 3-8, 10). These three cities are chosen as they are the only urban areas with at least three IMSs serving significant numbers of city students from which to base valid comparisons.

Story behind the baseline: Resident students of urban centers who attend IMSs outperform students in the city public schools in reading. The distinction between magnet and non-magnet schools is nearly identical for mathematics. To control for differences in the baseline of students when they enter IMSs, an analysis of student academic *growth* between 2008 and 2011 yielded nearly identical results – IMS students grew at a greater rate than non-IMS students, and New Haven's IMS student growth lagged behind that of Hartford and Waterbury. **Trend: ▲**

Proposed Actions to Turn the Curve:

Action 1: While most IMSs are enrolled to maximum capacity and are known to have sizeable wait lists, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) currently does not know the *actual* demand for magnet schools statewide. Wait list data was collected for the first time for the 2010-11 year beyond the Hartford region based on what the IMS each used as criteria for such a wait list. Further examination of the initial data will lead to a common definition for the 2011-12 data collection. Interest in IMSs beyond those who apply or enroll is not currently measured. Future analysis of such information will assist CSDE in ensuring maximum outreach for this high-interest program.

Action 2: CSDE will build upon existing enrollment management plans (EMPs) in assisting IMSs that are below or marginally above the threshold with expanding and improving their recruitment strategies. Recruitment strategies may include greater interaction between IMS administrators and potential feeder school children and families, action videos, and other methods beyond program literature. Best practices in recruitment are a part of a knowledge-sharing conference in May 2012.

Action 3: The CSDE will identify IMSs that excel in student retention and identify specific successful strategies used to keep students in school. CSDE will then work closely with IMSs that have higher dropout or lower attendance rates in employing identified successful strategies. Site visits will be targeted in high schools with higher dropout rates and other evidence of school culture and climate challenges. Appropriate research methodology will be used in analyzing school performance data. Best practices in retention are a part of a knowledge-sharing conference in May 2012.

Action 4: The CSDE will target site visitations to IMSs that lag behind others in student achievement in mathematics and/or reading, and enlist identified schools in the state's school accountability and support program. As 2009 is a baseline year, CSDE will continue to analyze multi-year trends in the performance of IMSs with respect to their counterparts in city schools, and among IMSs across cities. CSDE will attempt to direct resources to commission or conduct formal qualitative and quantitative program evaluations to cover a wider geographical area and elementary school analyses to better evaluate the effectiveness of IMSs statewide.

Data Development Agenda:

1) Identify, define and collect statewide data that will measure the *actual* demand for IMS services, particularly among students/families who are not yet applying to IMSs.

2) Identify, define and collect class size and student-staff ratio data to allow for studying the impact of class size on school performance.

3) Identify, define and collect student achievement data for grades not tested by CMT and CAPT to assist the measuring of IMS program effectiveness, particularly related to high school and PK-3 educational attainment.

4) Identify, define and collect additional data on successful student recruitment practices in IMSs.

5) Identify, define and collect additional data on successful student support and retention practices in IMSs.

6) Commission or conduct formal qualitative and quantitative program evaluations to expand upon a prior study of only secondary IMSs in the Hartford region. This expansion will include elementary-level and statewide analyses, and the gleaning of evidence of cause and effect relationships.