

**Project Narrative - Table of Contents**

**PEACE – Partners for Equity & Achievement in eastern Connecticut’s Education**

Competitive Preference Priority 1 :

Need for Assistance .....1

Competitive Preference Priority 4 :

Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).....9

Selection Criteria

(a) Plan of Operation .....21

(b) Quality of Personnel .....36

(c) Quality of Project design .....41

(d) Budget and resources .....77

(e) Evaluation plan .....81

(f) Commitment and capacity .....90

Appendices .....96

---

(i) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of its management plan to ensure proper and efficient administration of the project

---

Throughout the more than 20 year history of the system of magnet schools across E Connecticut, there has been support for the operation of these schools from local districts and from the state. State support for significant changes and the resources necessary for new schools are much more limited and, in some cases, no longer available. Through the opening of three new magnet schools and the significant revision of four existing magnet schools, PEACE will not only decrease minority group isolation, it will build the capacity of the schools to lead their students to successful futures. Capacity building will include, but not be limited to: implementation of systems-based instructional supports and effective teaching strategies ♦ implementation of systems-based marketing and recruitment ♦ implementation of systems-based computing and communication platforms ♦ implementation of systems-based data collection and analysis ♦ implementation of systems- and context-based parent and community engagement strategies ♦ implementation of systems- and context-based PD activities ♦ implementation of systems-based coaches in each magnet school setting ♦ hiring of systems- and context-based curriculum specialists ♦ implementation of systems-based shared services and purchasing.

PEACE will use a systems approach to reducing minority group isolation, improving student achievement, engaging parents, offering choice options, achieving systems reforms, and supporting instruction that strengthens students' knowledge of STEM and other core subjects, and the attainment of tangible skills that take them beyond their educational experience into successful careers. The collaborative nature of the PEACE plan allows for "adaptive change" in schools and, building their capacity and assuring sustainability. As Heifetz and Laurie state "The locus of responsibility for problem solving when a company faces an adaptive challenge must

shift to its people. Solutions to adaptive challenges reside not in the executive suite but in the collective intelligence of employees at all levels, who need to use one another as resources, often across boundaries, and learn their way to those. School governance councils, teachers, professors, families, and community members have been involved in the various aspects of planning and developing magnet schools to support this “adaptive change” process.

The systems approach is designed a highly innovative 21<sup>st</sup> century organizational design based largely on the work of social systems scientist Jamshid Gharajedaghi. PEACE will use the five critical dimensions of a system to create one that supports educational achievement as well as the people within the system. In order to successfully manage, implement, and assure the future success of a highly-effective organization of magnet schools with a regional presence – a system of people working together towards a common goal (developing and implementing successful inter- and intra-district magnet schools) – the work will be organized around these five critical dimensions, which together define the PEACE project as a whole:

*Wealth*: the development and implementation of a sustainable financial model ♦ *Knowledge*: the generation and dissemination of content-rich and thematic-focused information ♦ *Beauty*: the affective side of the PEACE project, creating interest and excitement about learning environments that are engaging, supportive, relevant ♦ *Values*: the formation and institutionalization of processes and systems relative to interrelationships, culture, cooperation, collaboration, competition, and conflict ♦ *Power*: the development and duplication of ability and responsibility – designing a sustainable and continually innovative model that contributes to the good of the whole.

As illustrated in the “PEACE Organizational Chart” in this proposal’s appendix, communication and working partnerships are clearly defined. As members of the PEACE

Advisory Team, each partner plays an important role in the governance and oversight of the project. Each school has a Parent Advisory Committee/Council; each school commits to working closely with the evaluators to ensure program efficacy; and each school has developed (and will continue to develop and strengthen) a wide range of community/business partners to support the strength and real-life application of its curriculum.

By using a systems-based approach that incorporates multiple levels of participation, accountability and decision-making, the capacity of these schools to continue their inclusive school climates will be secured beyond the use of these MSAP funds. Inherent in a systems-based approach to capacity building is a need for continuous improvement and design. An illustration of the PEACE project's systems model is included in the appendix to this application.

---

(ii) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of its plan to attain specific outcomes...

---

As outlined below and detailed in the PEACE Evaluation Narrative, the outcomes for this proposal are aligned with the six purposes of the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), offer a clear set of objectives, and are directly linked to the Program Purpose that they address.

*Program Purpose (1): The elimination, reduction, or prevention of minority group isolation in elementary and secondary schools with substantial portions of minority students....*All proposed magnet schools will reduce minority group isolation by decreasing the percentage of one or more groups of minority students (e.g., American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic) and increasing the percentage of white students as a result of the magnet program described in this proposal. Every student will fully participate in the program. All schools can accommodate the numbers of students needed to achieve desegregation goals. **Objective 1.** Minority group

isolation will be reduced at the proposed magnet schools. (This objective addresses MSAP Performance Measure a.)

**Performance Measures 1.1-1.7:** By October 1 of each project year, approved enrollment targets for each racial group (see **Table 3: Enrollment Data-Magnet Schools**) will be attained by reducing minority group isolation of one or more groups (e.g., the percentage of American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic students) at each proposed magnet school (using 2012-13 as the baseline) by at least 2 percentage points by year 1, 4 percentage points by year 2 and 6 percentage points by year 3. [NOTE: For each project year, the PEACE schools expect that they will receive at least 100 applications, with some schools receiving more than 500 applications.]

*Purpose 2: To develop and implement magnet school projects that will assist local education agencies achieve systemic reforms, and provide all students the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;*

The implementation of systemic reforms, magnet themes and rigorous curricula for all students will be facilitated and supported by the project and district office resource staff.

**Objective 2:** All students will receive instruction that includes their school's systemic reforms and magnet themes in units and courses aligned with State standards.

**Performance Measure: 2.1** By October 15 of each project year, each magnet school's Operations Plan will be revised and include objectives and activities that support: ► the adoption of high standards for all students and ► specific systemic reforms (e.g., Common Core Standards, Inquiry, Project Based Learning); and describe how they are coordinated with MSAP activities. Success will be determined through inspection of each school's plan. Implementation success will be measured by performance measure 3.1.

Purpose 3: The development and design of innovative educational methods and practices that promote diversity and increase choices in public elementary and secondary schools ....

Magnet theme development and implementation and adoption of systemic reforms will increase diversity and choice because the curricula are distinctive (not offered at other schools at the same grade levels) and innovative (combine systemic reforms and unique magnet themes). **Objective 3.** All students, at each magnet school, will receive magnet theme instruction.

**Performance Measure:** **3.1** By the end of each project year, all students, at all magnet schools, will receive magnet theme instruction coordinated with or including systemic reforms for at least 3 (year 1), 6 (year 2) and 10 (year 3) hours per week. Success will be determined through unit plan analysis and confirmed with surveys, interviews, and walkthroughs. Units and lessons produced as a result of this program will be peer reviewed.

Program Purpose 4: Courses of instruction within magnet schools that will substantially strengthen the knowledge of academic subjects and the attainment of tangible and marketable vocational, technological and professional skills of students attending such schools.

The U.S. Department of Education has approved Connecticut's ESEA Flexibility Request (NCLB Waiver). The School Performance Index (SPI), a composite of multiple data points that allows the assessment and comparison of school performance across more than one tested grade, subject or performance level. There are SPIs for each school for its total population, for each defined subgroup, and for each subject area tested. The defined subgroups are Black Students, Hispanic Students, Students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, Students with disabilities, and English Language Learners. The subject area SPIs are Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science. SPIs are based on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) for grades 3-8 and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for high school. The SPI scale is 0-

100. An SPI of 0 means that "on average, all students are at the below basic level." 33 means that "on average, all students are at the basic level." 67 means that "on average, all students are at the proficient level." 88 means that "on average, all students are at the target level." 100 means that "on average, all students are at the goal level or higher."

Schools have annual goals for the entire school, for each subject tested and for each subgroup with 20 or more students. Please note that subgroup SPIs are composites that include all subjects tested. For example, the SPI for Black students includes all subjects tested. SPI goals are calculated by the State Education Department based on school base-lines (the means of SPIs for the last three years or whatever years are available for new schools) and the target SPI of 88. Schools with SPIs of 88 or higher must maintain an SPI of at least 88 to meet its goal. Schools with baselines less than 88 must progress 1/12<sup>th</sup> the distance from their baselines to 88 each year. The maximum annual goal is capped at 3 points. **Objective 4.** Each year, for each magnet school, the proportion of students in each subgroup defined by the Connecticut Flexibility Request will meet or exceed its SPI goals for the entire school, for each subject tested and for each subgroup with at least 20 students.

***Performance Measures 4:*** By the end of each project year, each magnet school will achieve its SPI goal: **4.1:** in reading. **4.2:** in mathematics. **4.3:** in writing. **4.4:** in science. **4.5** By the end of each project year, each magnet school will achieve its SPI goals for their total population and for each defined subgroup. (These SPI measures include all subjects.) **4.6-4.8** By the end of each project year, the percentage of students from major racial and ethnic subgroups in magnet schools receiving assistance who score proficient or above on the CMT or CAPT will increase when compared with the previous year in: **4.6:** reading. **4.7:** math. **4.8:** writing. This performance measure addresses MSAP Performance Measures b and c: *The percentage of*

students from major racial and ethnic groups in magnet schools receiving assistance who score proficient or above on State assessments in reading/language arts and math. **4.9** By the end of the project period, as a result of the implementation of theme curricula, 75% of students at each magnet school will develop mastery of that curriculum, as determined by methods such as alternative performance measures including portfolios, teacher checklists, etc.

Purpose 5: Improvement of the capacity of LEAs, including through professional development, to continue operating magnet schools at a high performance levels after Federal funding...is terminated. **Objective 5.** Provide PD for magnet school teachers related to systemic reforms and magnet theme development and implementation.

**Performance Measures 5:** By the end of each project year, magnet school teachers will receive at least 30 hours of PD (workshops, courses, coaching) in each of the following areas: **5.1** the development and implementation of the systemic reforms listed in each school's Operations Plan; and **5.2** directly related to the implementation of the magnet theme.

Other performance measures related to capacity building include: (2.1, 3.1) development and implementation of systemic reforms and magnet theme units and courses.

Purpose 6: Ensuring that all students enrolled in the magnet school programs have equitable access to high quality education that will enable the students to succeed academically and continue with postsecondary education or productive employment.

An important aspect of ensuring that all students enrolled in the magnet schools have equitable access to high quality education is to monitor access. Performance measure 6.1 will be reported on each year and monitored by the each magnet school's principal, the project staff including the project director, and the evaluator. As with all performance measures, schools not attaining the measure will take corrective action approved by project and district staff.

**Objective 6a:** All students enrolled in the magnet schools will have equitable access to high quality education. *Performance Measure 6.1* By the end each project year, for each magnet school, at least 75% (yr. 1), 85% (yr. 2) and 95% (yr. 3) of classes (elementary) and STEM classes (secondary), will reflect their grade's enrollment for each racial/ethnic group and males and females by  $\pm 15$  percentage points.

In addition, performance measures 2.1, 3.1 are related to providing all students the opportunity to meet challenging State standards including common core standards.

Parent involvement also promotes equitable access to high quality education for all students.

**Objective 6b:** There will be an increase in parent participation at each magnet school.

*Performance Measure 6.2* By the end each project year, for each school, there will be an increase, compared with the previous year, in the number of participating parents.

---

(iii)The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the effectiveness of its plan for utilizing its resources and personnel ...

---

While PEACE is a collaborative endeavor among 6 dedicated partners, LEARN will act as the lead collaborative agent in PEACE. LEARN will have responsibility for working with the schools to assure quality services that directly impact student achievement and the success of the schools as theme-based magnets. LEARN will be responsible for fiscal oversight, fidelity to the implementation, and reporting. Each partner (Goodwin College, Norwich Public Schools, Windham Public Schools, New London Public Schools, and EASTCONN) will serve on the PEACE Advisory Team. Each partner entity meets the State of Connecticut laws and regulations for public schools and has policies related to but not limited to **non-discrimination, affirmative action, school climate, teacher certification, student achievement, and graduation requirements**. The policies for each PEACE LEA also assure non-discrimination as defined in

the Office of Civil Rights, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, electronic book readers and other emerging technologies, sexual violence and harassment, and harassment and bullying (including cyber-bullying). To ensure full compliance as described above, the Section 504 and Title IX Coordinators were consulted throughout the creation of the PEACE project.

American Education Solutions will act as the independent evaluator of PEACE. American Education Solutions (AES) will evaluate this project. For the past 18 years, AES has evaluated 51 Magnet Schools Assistance Program grants. In addition, the AES team has partnered with the Education Alliance at Brown University and the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina on 10 rigorous MSAP evaluations. For the 2013-2016 cycle AES is partnering with the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA on 5 rigorous MSAP evaluations as well as on survey development and analysis. CRESST will perform the rigorous test score study described in the evaluation section of this proposal. The AES MSAP site visit team includes former school administrators. All have been teachers and have extensive evaluation experience. One was an assistant superintendent, 4 were magnet school principals, 2 were magnet school directors and one an Equity Assistance Center director. The duties of the evaluators are described in the evaluation section.

LEARN has a history of more than 45 years of serving the 50,000 students in the 24 school districts and 26 communities of SE Connecticut. LEARN is a non-taxing governmental authority regional educational service center (RESA) that works in accordance with the laws of the State of Connecticut. Within the state of Connecticut, LEARN has the status of a Board of Education with its Executive Director being equivalent to a district's Superintendent of Schools. LEARN meets all the requirements of a Local Education Agency and is a non-profit. LEARN's mission statement reads: *LEARN initiates, supports and provides a wide range of programs and services*

*which enhance the quality and expand the opportunities for learning in the educational community. Through its leadership and resources and by working with schools, students, families and other community agencies, LEARN promotes regional and statewide cooperation and provides a framework for districts to achieve their goals.* Consequently, LEARN can apply for, receive, and directly expend funds on behalf of the member districts. It has been empowered to receive and disburse funds appropriated to LEARN by the local districts. LEARN has the power to employ personnel, enter into contracts, and provide cooperative education services. LEARN's fiscal management of local, private, public, state and federal funds has been successful throughout its long history.

LEARN has successfully managed all fiscal matters related to administering 6 magnet schools with an annual budget for the schools at approximately \$12 million. Furthermore LEARN's annual operating budget nears \$30 million for the administration of over 100 programs and services. LEARN has successfully managed a \$685,000 three-year grant through the USDOE Community Technology Centers program as well as over \$1 million in Title I and II funds in the past five years.

The goals of the PEACE proposal support the purposes of MSAP and are targeted to respond to the specific needs of reducing minority group isolation and improving outcomes for students in E Connecticut, specifically those in the urban centers of New London, Norwich, Groton, Windham, and Hartford. The PEACE project director and the PEACE Advisory Team will be responsible for ensuring the commitment of the 7 schools to these goals. LEARN has administered interdistrict magnet schools in the region for over 22 years. The successful growth and achievement of these schools attests to the strength of partnerships with the districts in the region, parental support and involvement, community support, and business support.

LEARN is integrally involved in CT's response to decreasing racial isolation among the urban, suburban, and rural communities. Furthermore, LEARN is well versed, well respected, and has proven experience in positively effecting student achievement through its PD strategies and offerings and its Direct Service programs to students and teachers.

PEACE will use these MSAP funds to support PD for the new themes, to purchase theme based equipment to support systems based curriculum, to purchase hardware and software, and to engage staff to assure capacity and sustainability.

As collaborative partners, the school districts of Norwich, Windham, and New London will support the schools under their purview. Goodwin College not only has responsibility for the Early Childhood magnet school but also operates the Connecticut River Academy Magnet School. Furthermore, Goodwin College is home to the *Institute for Magnet School Advancement and Best Practices*. The college is committed to education Pre-K through adulthood. EASTCONN, like LEARN, is a regional education service center. EASTCONN serves its member school districts through direct service programs, the operation of two magnet schools, and a variety of high quality, high demand PD programs.

---

(iv) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant how it will ensure equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who have been traditionally underrepresented ...

---

The 7 PEACE schools have committed to working together to address issues of cultural competence, school climate, instructional leadership, classroom instruction, assessment, and student achievement through a rigorous system of PD, parent engagement, and student activities. Additionally, teachers across the spectrum of grades will work together to bridge curriculums based on the Common Core State Standards. Furthermore, each district's state approved (to be

implemented by August 2013) teacher effectiveness (teacher evaluation) and administrator effectiveness (administrator evaluation) will be incorporated into each magnet school.

All 7 PEACE schools will offer equitable access to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to its students. All students at these 7 schools will receive equitable treatment with respect to school policies and practices. The PEACE project will incorporate gender equity practices into all PD activities that focus on curriculum development,, pedagogy, and content areas, including subject areas where females have traditionally been underrepresented.

Each staff member at the 7 PEACE schools will receive training to ensure equal access and treatment, including workshops to help teachers discuss factors that limit minority/female study of science/mathematics/engineering/technology interest and to develop and fully implement strategies to reverse this dynamic. Each student at the 7 PEACE schools will have access to all courses and will be able to fully participate in and access all whole-school opportunities.

LEARN will work with the 7 PEACE schools to ensure clearly defined interrelationship of each school's recruitment practices, marketing plans, applicant pools, and lottery processes to ensure full participation and inclusion of ELL students and students with disabilities.

---

(v) The Secretary determines the effectiveness of its plan to recruit students from different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds into the magnet schools.

---

The PEACE project approach to recruiting students from different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds into each of its schools is reflected in its coordinated marketing/recruitment plan. The identified magnet themes for the 7 PEACE schools were strategically selected to provide innovative learning opportunities that are unavailable in the non-magnet schools across E Connecticut and which will appeal to a broad range of students across the region. (It is important to note that the state of Connecticut implemented a strategy to decrease

isolation across the state by legislatively mandating a process for Parent Choice with regard to magnet schools. So while the recruitment for the PEACE schools is geared toward the communities that are closely located to the 7 PEACE schools (for ease of transportation), students from other districts are and will be encouraged to apply to the schools through the application and lottery process.)

As stated in Table 5 *Selection of Students*, all 7 of the PEACE schools will use a clear and transparent lottery process to select students. There are **no** entrance criteria for the schools - other than the completion of an application form within the timeframe designated for each school. Through the PEACE marketing navigation plan and relying on successful past practices, it is expected that each PEACE school's applicant pools will be diverse and will ensure balance in the student population. Prospective PEACE students will be directly recruited from the designated districts in E Connecticut associated with each magnet school in terms of governance districts, proximity for ease of transportation and open parent choice. Students from all socioeconomic strata, and especially from the urban environments that are identified as the key components for impact as a desegregation project, will attend the PEACE schools.

The PEACE Recruitment/Marketing Specialist will oversee a recruitment campaign for the 7 schools that requires community outreach in both urban and suburban areas, targeting early childhood environments, Head Start programs, middle schools, elementary schools, religious/community organizations, libraries, Parent-Teacher Organizations, health clinics, local businesses, and centers of worship. LEARN and EASTCONN enjoy strong relationships with their member districts, all of whom support the creation and operation of magnet schools as one means for reducing racial isolation. Therefore all districts in the LEARN and EASTCONN regions distribute magnet materials and allow presentations to be made to students and parents.

Examples of activities that will be conducted include: guidance breakfasts, new student orientations, school tours, radio and newspaper ads and announcements, backpack campaigns, online/social media tools, television commercials, billboards, movie theaters advertisements, regional transportation kiosks/stations, customer service training for faculty and staff at PEACE schools, and quarterly school newsletters. Materials that will be purchased and/or developed for each school will include: brochures, flyers, promotional give-a-ways, community banners, interactive websites, and recruitment signage. PEACE schools will reach out to the community partners for assistance in their recruiting efforts, encouraging their support in reaching out to potential students and families by making explicit the role they are playing in creating engaging and meaningful programs at each school.

Through the various media outlets, each community will be made aware of the lottery opportunities. A number of campaigns specific to each PEACE school will be conducted to create interest from a diverse population of potential students. Each school's community (teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and community partners) will assist with recruitment efforts at the various events. To ensure that a wide range of applicants can learn about the opportunities available through the PEACE schools, a specific print/media campaign for each school will include: creation/updating of a school website (with virtual tool feature) that will be available in English and Spanish; creation/updating of a school brochure (available in other languages as needed); and creation/widespread use of the school logo.

Through a lottery that is open and transparent the schools will reach students who are not only diverse in their ethnic and racial backgrounds, but also represent a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds. It is estimated that number of students in the PEACE magnet communities ranges from 66% to over 94%. The same dynamic in the PEACE feeder districts

ranges from 1% to 63%, with the vast majority falling between 1% and 10%. These numbers reflect the broad representation of social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds from which the PEACE student body will be recruited.

Every classroom in the 7 PEACE schools will reflect this distinctive spectrum of diversity through a heterogeneous mix. As documented throughout this proposal, highly qualified teachers will be on staff at each PEACE school and will receive intensive training in school culture, school climate, and classroom management, as well as theme/content integration.

Within each PEACE school classroom across E Connecticut, active learning environments will be created and maintained where interaction among **all** students is supported and encouraged.

**All of the information above demonstrates and supports the assertion that the 7 PEACE schools have developed a comprehensive, effective and achievable approach for operating these schools during the three-year project period.**

---

**Quality of Personnel:** (1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the qualifications of the personnel the applicant plans to use on the project.

---

LEARN in keeping with its policy and practices for non discriminatory employment will ensure that all PEACE personnel are selected for employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The same standard applies to all contracted consultants. All personnel, secured with the use of MSAP funds will meet or exceed requirements for certification. Current staff as outlined below have more than 10 years experience each in the operation and success of magnet schools. Collectively that experience is “priceless” and beyond 100 years. Job titles, descriptions of responsibilities, and biographies of identified current staff are included below. All job descriptions, hiring processes, and employment ads reflect LEARN’s Equal Opportunity Employment practices (EOE).

---

**Quality of Personnel:** (2)(i) The Secretary determines the extent to which the Project Director is qualified to manage the project.

---

**The PEACE Project Director** will be responsible for ensuring the commitment and active support of the PEACE schools to the goals of MSAP and the PEACE application. The Project Director will have overall responsibility for the planning, implementation and evaluation of project activities to meet the goals. Specifically, the Project Director will: oversee and make decisions regarding the PEACE budget; work directly with the LEARN Director of Business & Finance and accounting office; assure the effective implementation of each activity as it relates to the MSAP and PEACE goals; work with the independent evaluators; complete and/or assist in the collection and analysis of data related to student achievement and federal, state and local requirements; complete all required local, state, and federal reports. Doreen Marvin, Director of Development for LEARN, is named as the Project Director. LEARN, is the local regional

educational service center (RESC) for southeastern CT that provides comprehensive training and education services to individuals and organizations. Ms. Marvin has successfully managed and/or overseen USDOE grants in the past. She has extensive experience working with communities locally, statewide, and nationally. Ms. Marvin has facilitated and assisted many community-based, private and public groups in long-range planning, goal setting, setting communication systems, determining legislative agendas, program design, and developing standards of operations. She has strong project management skills and has served as an executive coach for organizational leaders. Within her work at LEARN, she has coordinated the development and start-up of 5 magnet schools (design, construction, curriculum development, marketing, and start-up).

---

**Quality of Personnel:** (2)(ii) The Secretary determines the extent to which other key personnel are qualified to manage the project.

---

The PEACE project, a collaboration among LEARN, New London Public Schools, Norwich Public Schools, EASTCONN, Windham Public Schools, and Goodwin College will create or significantly revise seven magnet schools. As the lead agency for the PEACE project, LEARN is has the status of a Board of Education with its Executive Director being equivalent to a district's Superintendent of Schools. LEARN and the other partners employ certified and non-certified staff. The PEACE project will be managed and implemented by a team of experienced, knowledgeable experts with extensive experience in planning, creating, and managing successful magnet schools. The Project Director will be housed at LEARN and will report to the Executive Director of LEARN, Dr. Eileen Howley. Dr. Howley came to LEARN in December 2012, after having served as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment in the West Hartford Public Schools. Dr. Howley helped shape a systemic approach to district and

school development aligned with mission framework, revitalized the process of curriculum review, and created structures to address special education needs during a transitional implementation time to a cross-categorical model for children with special needs. She also developed the plan for the Common Core State Standards, and worked with teachers and leaders to begin the process of redesigning West Hartford's system for educator evaluation and development. Prior to her time in West Hartford, Dr. Howley served as the Assistant Superintendent and Interim Superintendent of Farmington Public Schools.

A PEACE Advisory Team, comprised of representatives from the project partners, will work to ensure the full implementation of the project, as outlined in this proposal. The PEACE Project Director will lead the team in regular meetings to assess progress towards the objectives, discuss problems or challenges to allow for adjustments as needed to continue forward momentum of the project, and to make certain that accurate and timely data is collected and reported, so that the impact and effectiveness of the project can be evaluated.

Bios and resumes for additional key project personnel (including PEACE school principals and PEACE Advisory Team members) are included in the appendix of this application. Additionally, job descriptions for key positions for which individuals have not yet been identified, are included in the appendix of this application.

---

**Quality of Personnel:** (2)(iii) The Secretary determines the extent to which teachers who will provide instruction in participating magnet schools are qualified to implement the special ...

---

In keeping with the Connecticut Plan for Implementing the Teacher and Paraprofessional Quality Provisions, PEACE is committed to hiring *highly qualified teachers* in all of the PEACE schools, whether magnet-theme or core-content focused, such that an ongoing professional culture that supports high student achievement is maintained into the future, beyond the federal

MSAP support. A highly qualified teacher holds full state certification as a teacher (including participation in or certification through alternative routes) or has passed a state teacher licensing exam and holds state certification. Those teachers new to the profession (no public teaching experience) who are teaching core academic subjects must: Hold at least a bachelor's degree; and at the elementary level, demonstrate by passing a state test on subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading/language arts, writing, mathematics and other areas of the basic elementary curriculum (in Connecticut, this is PRAXIS I in reading, writing and mathematics and PRAXIS II elementary tests); At the secondary level, demonstrate a high level of competency by: passing a state test in each academic subject in which the teacher teaches, or have successfully completed, in each academic subject in which the teacher teaches an undergraduate major or a graduate degree or coursework equivalent to an undergraduate major or advanced certification or credentials.

Job descriptions for the position of Teacher, include the following responsibilities: Teach each student through planning and individualized instruction to meet the needs of student; Meet professional responsibilities listed in the Connecticut Teacher Competencies; Plan a variety of appropriate individual and group activities in order to accommodate various learning styles; Work cooperatively with staff, parents, colleagues, and administrators; Select appropriate learning materials from available sources: texts, supplements, media, etc.; Encourage students to work to the best of their abilities and to take pride in their achievements; Create an atmosphere conducive to the development of confidence and respect for adults and students; Establish criteria for and inform students of the basis of assessment; Promote self-awareness, self-respect, appropriate behavior and responsibility; Provide an educationally stimulating environment in which students learn and interact; Assess and evaluate student learning on an on-going basis;

Maintain a professional attitude in working with others; Effectively manage student behavior;  
Act as a case coordinator for one or more students with identified special needs; work  
collaboratively with special education related-services staff

---

**Quality of Personnel:** (2)(iv) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant, as part  
of its non-discriminatory practices, will ensure that its personnel are selected for employment ...

---

The partners of PEACE in keeping with their approved policies and practices for non-discriminatory employment will ensure that the personnel are selected for employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The same standard applies to all contracted consultants.

All personnel, secured with the use of MSAP funds will meet or exceed requirements for certification. Current staff among the partners have more than 20 years experience each in the creation, operation, support and success of magnet schools. Collectively that experience is “priceless”. All teachers and administrators in the schools meet or exceed the state of Connecticut certification requirements. Job titles, descriptions of responsibilities, and biographies of identified current staff are included below. All job descriptions, hiring processes, and employment ads reflect Equal Opportunity Employment practices (EOE).

---

**Quality of Project Design:** (1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the quality of the project design based on sections 5305(b)(1)(A), 5305(b)(1)(B), 5305(b)(1)(D)(i)...the ESEA

---

The goals of the *Partners for Equity & Achievement in eastern Connecticut's Education (PEACE)* proposal support the purposes of MSAP and are targeted to respond to the specific needs of the low-achieving students in southeastern Connecticut, specifically those in the city of New London. PEACE's outcomes (i.e., objectives and performance measures) are aligned with the six purposes of the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP). A set of objectives and performance measures are included in the "Plan of Operation" section of this proposal.

---

**Quality of Project Design:** (2)(i) The Secretary determines the extent to which each magnet school...will promote desegregation, including how each proposed magnet school program will...

---

The current concentration of minority students in New London, Norwich, Windham, and Hartford allows for only very limited interaction between and among students of different backgrounds. The PEACE project, if approved, will support the development or significant revision of seven magnet schools. One school is located in New London; another in Waterford. Two will be located in Norwich; one in Windham; one in Danielson; and the final located in East Hartford. The PEACE schools will reduce minority group isolation by attracting students from pre-dominantly non-minority for each of the project years, consistent with the goals established in each school's Operations Plan. The identified magnet themes were strategically selected to provide innovative and engaging learning opportunities that are unavailable in the non-magnet schools across eastern Connecticut.

PEACE schools will reflect a spectrum of diversity, with a heterogeneous mix of students. The faculty of each PEACE school will include highly qualified teachers across all of their curricular strands. Within each classroom, active learning environments will be maintained

where interaction between and among students is encouraged and supported. In conjunction with learning about group process skills and cooperation, students will also learn important communication skills that are critical for success in the workplace of the future.

Keys to the success include an inclusive learning environment for ELL students and those with disabilities, allowing them to develop their potential. The inclusion of these students will provide them opportunities to interact with students without disabilities and students for whom English is their primary language in both formal and informal settings.

Professional development for the PEACE schools will include exposure to instructional strategies to facilitate learning for diverse learners in flexible groupings. Newly created thematic units and lessons will be developed to address differentiated instruction and cooperative learning to reach all students.

The seven PEACE schools will utilize cooperative learning strategies to maximize student success and to support a variety of interactions within their diverse student populations. As envisioned for the PEACE project, cooperative learning offers a wide range of approaches regarding how students are grouped in heterogeneous teams for the purposes of effective instruction. Through the incorporation of cooperative learning strategies into the seven PEACE schools, educators will be able to foster a new sense of partnership and interaction between and among learners in which the focus is on “cooperation.”

Teachers will receive comprehensive coaching and training to support their ability to be part of creating a safe, engaging, and inclusive learning environment. Each school is committed to building communities that support student achievement. To that end, every effort is made to ensure that students feel that there is a place for them in their school; that they have access to every learning opportunity within their school; and that staff, resources, and attention is available

to them and focused on their needs. The seven PEACE schools recognize the important of meeting students “where they are” by bringing what they need to the process. These schools have built in a number of “safety nets” to catch students before they falter and to prevent them from doing poorly academically.

---

**Quality of Project Design:** (2)(ii) The Secretary determines the extent to which each magnet school ...will improve student academic achievement for all students attending each magnet . . .

---

The PEACE project will utilize multiple strategies to support students in achieving academic success in all curricular areas, including those that are related to each particular school’s magnet theme. Differentiated instruction is a critical tool for teachers, enabling them to flexibly respond to students’ diverse learning needs. As described throughout this proposal, the PEACE professional development plan will prepare educators to modify their instruction to meet the range of their students’ instructional needs, academic interests, and learning preferences; and to systematically use ongoing assessment so that students who need additional opportunities to strengthen and build required skills and knowledge will receive the appropriate coaching and instruction.

All seven PEACE schools begin with high expectations for their students. These high expectations are coupled with a firm belief that failure is not an option. If a student struggles to reach competency for a particular skill or lesson, s/he will be encouraged to continue his/her efforts and will be offered intensive support until s/he achieves competency or mastery and completes all of the requirements or expectations for that lesson. However it is also understood that every student works at his/her own pace and level. A variety of opportunities is available for students to receive extra support and to complete work before, during, and after school and during school breaks.

The following is a description of each PEACE school and their plans and strategies to ensure student success and achieve the goals of the project in keeping the with MSAP purposes:

### **Science & Technology Magnet High School (STMHS)**

STMHS, a regional, comprehensive high school that specializes in STEM programming, opened its doors in 2004. Integrated, blended programs can also accommodate unique student interests and career paths within the STEM areas. The STMHS program is designed to prepare students for success in STEM area post secondary institutions, leading students to earn an Associates or Bachelors degree.

STMHS prepares students to succeed, not just during their four years of high school, but for a future beyond the magnet school. The mission of STMHS is *to prepare its body for further educational opportunities, including the possible pursuit of careers in science, technology, engineering, or math; to break down racial ethnic, economic, gender, and other social and academic barriers; and to helps its students become well-rounded, scientifically literate and responsible 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens.* This mission is aligned with and supports the mission statement of New London Public Schools (NLPS), which is *to provide an equitable, relevant and quality education, which enables students in a diverse community to make a responsible impact on society.* NLPS believe that all children can learn to their highest level, in a safe and orderly environment, given quality instruction of relevant curricula, with clear expectations, enough time, meaningful support and appropriate resources. They will accomplish all this through the shared involvement of home, school and community which develops, nurtures, and reinforces the success of all who are part of the educational process.

**Magnet Theme Description:** While providing its students with a strong liberal arts curriculum, STMHS's overarching focus is on the four "STEM" areas, with the full implementation of its Bio-Medical Sciences curriculum in the 2013-2014 academic year.

STMHS focuses on career and higher education opportunities in science, including the biomedical sciences, chemistry, environmental studies, engineering fields (such as, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, electrical engineering, and civil engineering) and mathematics. The curriculum includes technology courses, including those from the New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) as well as *Project Lead The Way* designed programs of study. Students choosing technology career paths at STMHS will have the opportunity to take courses in 3D animation, or video and studio production, and be certified in one or more of the following "Adobe", "Autodesk", "Microsoft", technologies.

At STMHS, students engage in theoretical and applied courses based on the values of science: honesty, respect, curiosity, creativity, open-mindedness, risk, self-discipline, communication, and collaboration. With its focus on STEM curricula, STMHS has developed the following set of expectations around their students' learning:

**Science:** Students will come to appreciate that science is a process, not a set of facts to be memorized. They will learn how to examine problems, formulate hypotheses, and design and conduct experiments. Students will be able to collect, organize, and analyze data; they will learn to draw conclusions and to reflect on the validity of their conclusions. They will also learn how to communicate their findings to others through written, technical reports, and verbal presentations. They will come to understand the "nature of science" and how science crosses disciplines and relates to societal issues.

STMHS has at its core the belief in creating a solid foundation in the sciences. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of science courses, including: STEM Science, STEM Biology, Green Chemistry, Honors Chemistry, Mitchell College Chemistry, Physics, AP Biology, AP Environmental Science, and Project Lead the Way Biomedical Program.

**Technology:** Students will learn that science and technology are not identical, but rather complementary to each other, each with its distinct role in society. Students will recognize that society uses the fruits of scientific knowledge to apply technology to specific needs and problems and that technology also has an impact on society and needs to be applied thoughtfully and carefully. Students will come to know that there are ethical and moral considerations to the application of technology.

**Engineering:** Students will learn and apply the design process, acquire strong teamwork and communication proficiency and develop organizational, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills. They will discover the answers to questions like how are things made and what processes go into creating products. Students will use the same industry-leading 3D design software. They will design, test and actually construct circuits and devices such as smart phones and tablets and work collaboratively on a culminating capstone project.

**Mathematics:** Students will be able to understand and manipulate numbers, patterns and functions; to use inductive and deductive reasoning; to assemble, organize, and analyze data and make reasonable and logical conclusions and predictions; to construct mathematical models and solve numeracy word problems; to understand and apply algebraic and geometric concepts; and to realize that mathematics is a powerful tool for problem solving and is a day-to-day life skill. **Instructional Methods:** An overarching strategy of diversified instruction is

used to ensure equitable access to all courses, and enhanced by opportunities for remediation for those students who come to STMHS deficient in basic academic skills preparation. Small group instruction, after-school help, and summer academic enrichment programs provide a successful combination of strategies that lead a significant increase in student performance.

STMHS takes a proactive, preventative approach to failure. All ninth and tenth grade courses are designed using the *Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curriculum Goals and Standards* as a guiding principle. Assessments aligned with STMHS's curriculum units will be administered. Throughout its operation, STMHS seeks to improve the general curriculum and the instructional strategies of its teachers through extensive professional development to minimize the number of students who do not experience success. Recognizing that a significant percentage of students will arrive at STMHS with some academic deficiencies (more than half of New London students failed to reach proficiency on the Grade 8 CMT for science), STMHS will employ an aggressive remediation program.

Every student accepted to STMHS is assessed in math and reading. Options for remediation include after-school and Saturday sessions. Remediation will be customized to the needs of individual students to the greatest extent possible, particularly for students who do not reach a minimum level of proficiency in all areas of CAPT. STMHS works closely with ELL staff to assess those populations and determine appropriate strategies to meet their needs. The STMHS staff seeks to effectively use a wide range of instructional strategies and modifications such as grouping, instructional styles to maximize student potential. STMHS' small student-to-teacher ratio and its advisor/advisee program create very positive student-teacher relationships, resulting in a significant and positive impact on student achievement. **Professional Development:** STMHS's Professional Development Plan fully commits to the principles and practices of the

*Connecticut Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development.* Improvement of student achievement is the driving force behind the plan. In alignment with the STMHS focus on science, significant amounts of professional development will focus on science career pathways, curriculum, assessment, and instruction. Partnering STEM businesses and organizations are asked to support the school by providing trainers who have a proven record of success in their particular field. Teachers in non-science content areas will participate in some science-related professional development (in addition to their discipline-specific and science content areas will participate in some science-related professional development (in addition to their discipline-specific and school-wide PD) so they can better understand their role in supporting science learning and career skills.

Since teachers are often unaware of the many STEM career pathways, all teachers will receive instruction in this area and in the knowledge and skills employers are increasingly seeking in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. STMHS fosters a culture of long-term success by asking teachers to take an active role in developing student interest and engagement in successful career pathways.

With the infusion of these MSAP funds, STMHS plans to develop a cadre of STEM specialists and coaches among its staff members. Identifying highly-qualified and successful teachers in the primary curricular areas, these individuals will participate in training and workshops, with the goal of returning to the school and serving as on-site resources to the entire faculty, thereby building the capacity of the school to continue its strong instructional model and welcoming, inclusive community beyond the three years of the MSAP funding.

### **Language & Arts Middle Magnet School (LAMMS)**

The Language & Arts Middle Magnet School (LLAMS) opened its doors in 2008 and currently

serves 100 students in grades 6-8 from across southeastern Connecticut. LAMMS is a model urban-suburban collaborative effort; accomplished through an arts enriched core curriculum that will empower students to enhance their understanding of academic content, of themselves, and of the world by embracing the arts and their potential to impact communication, culture, and creativity. Additionally, the school reduces racial, ethnic, and economic isolation while promoting student achievement, through the provision of an engaging, appealing and meaningful arts/technology infused curriculum. LAMMS' mission is *to provide a comprehensive student-centered middle school program within an arts enriched setting of instruction dedicated to building a student body that is bilingual, bi-literate, and multicultural.* The school's core curriculum empowers students to enhance their understanding of academic content, themselves, and the world by embracing the arts and their potential to impact communication, culture, and creativity. **Magnet Theme Description:** *Language, Art, Technology = One Community*

At LAMMS, students develop skill level in both Spanish and English within a multi-cultural setting, and experience music, art and theater within both the classroom and the greater local arts community. Beginning in fall 2013, LAMMS has committed to expanding its thematic curriculum to include a new focus on Technology, infusing its core and arts curriculum with a deep understanding of technology as a tool and an art. LAMMS will also focus on adding additional languages (Russian and Chinese/Mandarin) to expand student understanding and appreciation for multiculturalism. As an effective multi-lingual program, LAMMS will support the learning of a second (and perhaps third) language through the school's content areas, while refining their native language skills. This will be achieved by: using instructional strategies that allow for comprehensive input and output; giving students the opportunity to develop proficient

listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension skills in languages beyond their native language; and giving students real-life experiences to practice and enhance their native and subsequent language ability, through the use of authentic and meaningful materials that reflect the cultural diversity of the school and community

**Instructional Methods:** A variety of instructional strategies are used at LAMMS to address the wide range of student needs. *Thematic Instruction:* learning through integrated units of study, making connections among content areas, and subject matter taught through literature and learning center projects. *Cooperative Learning Groups:* students work interdependently on tasks with common objectives, demonstrating individual accountability and social equity in groups and classroom setting; and extensive interactions among L1 (Native Language) and L2 (Second Language) students to develop and deepen bi-lingualism. *Sheltered Content Instruction:* The use of sheltered strategies to promote comprehension is an employed strategy at LAMMS and involved adapting the language of texts or tasks and the use of certain methods familiar to language teachers (demonstrations, visuals, graphic organizers, or cooperative work) to make instruction more accessible to students of differing English proficiency levels. Strategies could include: visual aids and modeling instruction, allowing students to negotiate meaning, and amplifying L2 input through slower speech rate, clear enunciation, repetitive vocabulary, and simplified sentence structure. *Experiential Hands-On Activities:* care is taken to insure that language input is: challenging, promoting high levels of language proficiency and critical thinking; is interesting, relevant, and of sufficient quantity to promote greater acquisition; is integrated into curriculum, including structured tasks and unstructured opportunities for students to use language; encourages students to use instructional language; and balances the needs of all students. **Technology Integration:** The decision to add a curricular focus on “technology”,

speaks to the long-held recognition of the connection between “art” and “technology”, going back to the ancient Greek root words for “technology”: *technē* (art) and *logia* (logic). Scientists experiment with new ideas in their laboratories; artists test media and concepts in their studios. *Technology* is the natural intersection between the two disciplines. Understanding this connection and the recognition that both art and science involve the systematic use of a skill or technique relate to the testing of theories and ideas, LAMMS made the decision to add a new curricular focus on technology within their integrated bi-lingual and arts curriculum beginning in fall 2013. Leonardo da Vinci might be the clearest example of this art-technology connection, as illustrated by his ease to move between the worlds of science and art, nimbly applying his studies from one subject to the other.

With President Obama’s newly-launched *Educate to Innovate* campaign, the concept of *innovation* as a link between science and arts is made clear. It is not only important to have children well-versed and comfortable in STEM subjects; we also want them to become innovators. How do we educate students to become creative and to innovate? The clearest road map appears to be through the teaching of digital art, understood as any design work done through digital means, ranging from computer programming to 3D modeling, to illustrations. As a tool, digital art is a blend of technology and art and has at its foundation an intriguing mix of science, engineering and mathematics. Digital arts become a real-world, exciting applications of those concepts taught in a math class. Teaching students to create a geometric pattern by way of computer programming, or to artwork using vector graphics, make a geometric pattern using computer programming, or design a building using 3D tools is an intuitive way to teach the STEM subjects. The beauty of *digital* art vs. more traditional approaches is that it makes creativity and innovation much less risky for students. Knowing that the “undo” function is

always available to them, allows students to relax and let go of their worry about making a mistake, since they have the opportunity to fix or correct their work – or to simply cancel and begin again. **Professional Development:** LAMMS is committed to the principles and practices of *Connecticut Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development*, and its professional development plan fully demonstrates that commitment.

LAMMS plans to offer professional development to its teachers covering a wide range of topics with the goal of increasing student performance and strengthening instruction at all levels. Topics in the LAMMS PD plan include: *Classroom Instruction that Works, Effective Data Teams, Reading in the Content Area, Cultural Competence, The National Technology Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards.*

In alignment with the LAMMS expansion into arts technology, significant amounts of professional development will focus on implementing a fully-integrated arts curriculum, language immersion, technology integration, and effective instruction.

In addition to the above, each LAMMS teacher will have an individual professional development plan with goals developed both by the teacher and administrators. These goals shall be explicitly based on the core and subject-area competencies of the *Connecticut Common Core of Teaching* and the LAMMS mission, values, beliefs, and school and student objectives. Teachers will engage in substantial reflection as part of an annual instructional portfolio. All teachers will be formally and informally observed by administrators through the school year and provided with written feedback. Teachers will also be supported by their peers, including opportunities for co-teaching, with peers both inside and outside of each teacher’s subject area.

At 447 students, Moriarty School is the one of the largest elementary schools in Norwich, where the percentage of minority students throughout the district has nearly doubled in recent years. Teachers across the district engage students from all over the world speaking over 30 different languages. In some schools, this change is much more pronounced. Moriarty School, for instance, served 15% minority students in 2002. Today, the school is over 56% minority. Moriarty's mission says: *We strive to prepare each student to become an independent, curious learner who possesses a thirst for knowledge and has the ability to cooperate with others while demonstrating tolerance of an individual's differences.* While clearly faced with numerous challenges, the school enjoys a strong educational tradition. Moriarty School is truly a diverse community of learners, whose students come from all over the city because of the two Bilingual Centers (Spanish and Haitian Creole) and its Integrated Day Program. All grade levels at Moriarty are not achieving at the levels expected by the district and state. The achievement gap for the Black subgroup in both Reading and Math is especially concerning. According to 2012 CMT data, only 40% of Moriarty Black 4th grade students were proficient in Reading. Comparatively, 71% of their White peers were proficient. At each grade level in the school over the past four years, a similar disparity can be found for Black students in both Reading and Math. While "bright spots" do exist, the school is overwhelmed by an increasingly negative trend. The school also experiences a constant influx of ELL "newcomers" (defined as a student who has been in a US school for less than 30 months) and lacks guidance and resources on how best to accelerate their learning. **Magnet Theme Description:** Environmental Science: *"Making Mindful Choices for Ourselves, Our Environment and Our World"*. A survey conducted by the Moriarty School Governance Council (SGC) revealed that families were very supportive of transition to a full school magnet. Twenty five percent of the families completed this survey and

they overwhelmingly supported a STEM-focused theme using the lens of Environmental Science. The Moriarty SGC consisting of parents, teachers, and community members and the full school have been integrally involved in planning for a fall 2013 opening. Included in this planning have been magnet school tours, virtual tours, and presentations to the families and the Board of Education. Teachers have been involved in all levels of decision-making, and learning about theme based instruction. Moriarty Magnet School will appeal to both minority and non-minority students alike with its engaging Environmental Sciences curriculum including a wide range of new learning technologies throughout the school, a community garden, a Science Lab/Demonstration Kitchen where students will study foods (including those grown in their garden) and develop a deep understanding of nutrition and the school's environmental footprint.

**Instructional Methods:** The overall reform approach in Norwich, and as implemented at Moriarty Magnet School, seeks to establish **consistent high-quality literacy instruction at every grade level** starting with K-5 and bridging over to the middle schools. The addition of the intra-district Moriarty Magnet School has been approved by the Board of Education and will be ready for full operations by fall 2013, with the support provided through these MSAP funds. Given the specific complexities of the challenges facing the Norwich district, achieving this goal fully will require several complementary initiatives, including: Leadership and Change; Teacher Accountability; and Administrative Accountability. Additionally, Norwich is working towards a newly integrated K-8 Curriculum that also reflects the cultural diversity of Norwich; Additional focus areas for Moriarty Magnet School curriculum are: *Reading and Writing, SRBI Intervention, Meaningful Assessments; Cultural Competency; and Literacy At Home:* A deeper integration of parents into the academic progress and goal-setting of students, especially those who are below proficiency. **Professional Development:** At its core, the professional development plan for

Moriarty focuses on instructional improvement in all curricular areas, with an emphasis on the new Environmental Sciences curriculum. Members of the faculty will participate in the CT Science Center's three-year PD program, the "Institute for Inquiry." The goal for this institute is to create long-lasting improvements in science learning for Connecticut students and it focuses on sustainability, rather than simply mere exposure to new teaching strategies. The school will provide job-embedded training, with modeling and reflection from STEM specialists, instructional coaches, and the school principal to create a continuous cycle of improvement and ensure that every lesson is rich in content and contains the following essential elements: clearly stated learning objectives and criteria for student success; modeling and demonstration by the teacher; guided student practice (both independently and in small groups); formative assessment through consistent checks for understanding, and closure to help organize and reinforce what has just been learned for students. Providers of professional development at Moriarty will include, but not be limited to Mid-Continent Research for Education & Learning (MCREL), LEARN, and the University of Connecticut. Community partners, such as Norwich Public Utilities will also provide development for teachers and families with regard to Energy and the Environment. Staff will be engaged in PD specifically related to the integration of Environmental Sciences in literacy and math.

An additional component that is critical to Moriarty's PD plan is addressed in their School Improvement Plan, which states: Professional development shall be provided to Moriarty staff including building-based learning, school-wide and grade level data team meetings (SWDT & GLDT) job-embedded professional development and support, "Norwich University" workshops, faculty meetings, and CALI module workshops. GLDT and SWDT meetings will focus on the effective implementation of Norwich Public Schools' curricula within the classroom. At

Moriarty, these will include on-going PD in literacy, PBIS/positive school climate, Every Day Calendar Math and Touch Math, and social behavior. Additionally, teachers will develop a deeper understanding of the learning needs of English Language Learners and enhance their skills in providing more effective instruction in Literacy and Numeracy. Among the resources to be used are the CT Common Core State Standards, the ELA Curriculum Guide, the Math Curriculum Guide and the Connecticut English Language Learner Frameworks.

### **Wequonnoc Magnet School**

Wequonnoc Magnet School will be an intra-district magnet school, serving to address racial group isolation within the Norwich Public Schools, with a planned opening of fall 2014. Wequonnoc will receive less than 100,000.00 for the planning year. Wequonnoc faces many of the same challenges as does Moriarty: high minority population (63.5% compared to 56.5% in the Norwich Public Schools and 38% across Connecticut); high % of free/reduced eligible students (83.5% compared to 70.7% in the district and 34% across Connecticut); and a significant percentage of English Language Learners (11.2% compared to 23% in Norwich and 5.4% in Connecticut.) These risk factors combined with low achievement by students – and especially black and minority students – points to a community-wide concern regarding the need to improve this school. According to the USA.com website, Wequonnoc School was in the bottom 13% of elementary schools across the country, as of the 2010 academic year. The website rated Wequonnoc 1.5 out of a possible 5 points, using publically available historical Math and English performance data.

With a clear mandate to positively impact the education of children in Norwich, and specifically at Wequonnoc School, the decision was made that as of September 2014, the school would become an Arts & Technology intra-district magnet school. **Magnet Theme Description:**

A survey conducted by the Wequonnoc School Governance Council (SGC) revealed that families were very supportive of the school's transition to a full school magnet. Thirty percent of the families completed the survey and there was overwhelming support from families for an Arts and Technology theme focus. Involvement in the decision making to move forward with detailed planning and full implementation in year 2014 has included magnet school tours, virtual tours, and presentations to the families and the Board of Education. Teachers have been actively involved as well in decision-making processes and learning about theme based instruction. The planning for Year One of the PEACE project will include all staff visiting other magnet schools, professional development on Arts and Technology integration, and the securing of a Magnet Theme Coordinator (part time in Year One and moving to full-time in Years Two and Three) to assist curriculum development for the school. The goal being to build capacity within the school to positively impact student achievement and minority group isolation through the use of embedded development, increased parent engagement, and curricular enhancements.

As information has been shared with families and the wider Norwich community, it is clear that there is tremendous enthusiasm and support for this move to an intra-district Arts & Technology magnet school. Ideas under consideration include multiple performances and presentations by students (two or three times each month) with chances to display projects and artwork throughout the city. Visiting artists and artists-in-residence will work with teachers and students to fully infuse the arts and technology in their learning environment, and a full-range of technology and instructional supports are planned to ensure the complete integration of the school's theme across the curriculum. **Instructional Methods:** As the school is still in the early stages of planning, many of these decisions are yet to be made. Careful study of data and analysis of emerging trends within the district and at Wequonnoc will be conducted to ensure

well-founded decisions. **Professional Development:** will use the first year of the PEACE project to focus on finalizing its plans for a fall 2014 opening as an Arts & Technology K-5 magnet school. Included in this planning will be the development of its professional development plan, identification of its arts and technology teachers, securing community and business partners, and completing its plan for implementation of its new curriculum. Members of the faculty and staff will participate in the National Institute for Magnet School Leadership and Arts and Technology integration through specialists such as Real Visions. The professional development plan for this school focuses on instructional improvement in all curricular areas, with an emphasis on the new Arts and Technology curriculum. The school will provide job-embedded training, with modeling and reflection from STEM specialists and Arts Specialists.

### **Quinebaug Middle College (QMC)**

Quinebaug Middle College (QMC), located on the campus of Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC), currently enrolls students in grades 10 through 12. The majority of students who apply and ultimately enroll (via lottery) at QMC are among those referred to as “able-but-disenfranchised, disaffected” students. Many come to QMC having experienced limited success of engagement in their home district schools; they have high rates of absenteeism, and low credit attainment in their previous high school experiences. QMC believes strongly that, given strong personalized support, rich and diverse learning opportunities with real-world relevance, and the requirements for high student involvement in school governance, students will develop habits of mind and behavior that will form the basis for future success, in school and beyond. Many QMC students, in annual surveys, report being surprised by their own success and by their increased commitment to their learning. They attribute those changes to the caring work of their teachers and the culture of motivation they experience at QMC. During their time at QMC, the changes

seen in the student cohorts are most strongly demonstrated as such: achievement of students in QMC courses; enrollment and success of QMC students in QVCC classes; the graduation rate of students who remain at QMC and in their plans for their post-secondary experiences.

**Magnet Theme Description:** With the support of the requested MSAP funds, QMC will be expanding both its enrollment and its STEM programming through its expansion on the campus of QVCC. The 45,000 square foot expansion will add state-of-the-art laboratories, manufacturing facilities, and additional classroom to support STEM-centered learning in academic courses, and real-world application of concepts in Service-Learning courses. Senior Capstone projects, engineering/manufacturing competitions, expanded work study and internship programs. The expansion will finally allow QMC to accommodate students in its burgeoning applicant pool. In addition, this expansion will allow QMC to pilot the addition of a cohort of students in grade 9, so that they may better serve students by bringing them into the school as early as possible in their high school careers. Many of QMC's 10<sup>th</sup> grade students come to the school only after struggling through their freshman year in their home district. The expansion will allow them to begin high school with a clean slate and before they begin developing an image of themselves as unsuccessful. QMC projects that student enrollment will more than double over the next three years from its current 111 to 225 students.

The overarching theme of QMC is that of the *middle college experience*. Research at the school indicates that students who are more directly involved and responsible for the design, development, and management of their own learning, and who engage in an educational program that integrates academic concepts across curricula, with real-world/authentic learning experiences, thrive in a college environment in which they have greater autonomy and access to laboratory, career and vocational resources that are, otherwise, unavailable to them in the

region's public high schools. Students are better prepared to engage in sustained learning and its application when they work as a member of a small community, supported by adult mentors/advisors who work individually with them.

A primary focus of QMC's goal of providing opportunities for real-world application of knowledge is through its programming in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Curricula at QMC are designed to be inherently interdisciplinary, and learning experiences in Service Learning and Exploratory courses provide numerous opportunities for students to understand the purpose and practical applications of the knowledge they acquire. For example, concepts students encounter in Environmental Science and Biology classes are practically applied in the Service Learning course in which students are engaged in the preservation and maintenance of a local community nature trail. Students are required to research, debate, and write about ethical, moral, and philosophical viewpoints associated with current issues in all areas of science in the Critical Readings in Science course. Students interested in chemistry, mathematics, manufacturing and engineering participate in a Plastics course, during which they also prepare for the design, manufacture, and marketing of a product comprised of plastics materials in preparation for the Plastics Expo, a high-school competition sponsored by Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) and Quinebaug Manufacturing Institute, a partnership of local businesses involved in the plastics industry; QMC students have won several awards in this competition. Through collaboration with QVCC, QMC students will be able to enroll in a new manufacturing technology program offered through the college in 2013-2014. **Instructional Methods:** QMC approaches the teaching and learning process as a collaboration among teachers, students, families, and the QVCC college community. QMC relies on numerous resources to enrich the educational opportunities available for its students,

and they in turn seek to enhance life on the QVCC campus and provide cultural/recreational events for QMC families and community through coffee houses, art shows, and other social events sponsored for all community members.

QMC is a competency-based school, in which the goal for all students is to achieve and demonstrate a level of knowledge and skill equivalent to a minimum grade of a B, aligned with curricular goals. Students are required to achieve competence in an area of study before receiving credit. QMC's definition of educational competence reflects the school-wide 21<sup>st</sup> Century Expectations for Student Learning, which require students to think critically and apply their learning, through listening, speaking, reading, writing, using and evaluating information, and solving problems. Students have many opportunities and receive support to improve their work through additional instruction, tutoring and extended time.

Failure is not an option for any student at QMC. If a student does not demonstrate achievement at the competency level, he or she will be encouraged to continue to work in that area and receive intensive support until he or she achieves a B and completes all the requirements for the course. During QMC vacations, and for four weeks in the summer, the school runs a free Prescriptive School (designed to address specific student needs). Additionally, built into QMC's schedule is a vast store of "safety nets" to catch students before they falter and to prevent students from doing poorly academically.

QMC has developed a schedule that allows disconnected, disenfranchised students to connect with their new school and the adults in the school's learning community. Students meet daily during a Futures Advisory class to assist them in developing positive relationships at the school, to work on habits of school success and to address school-wide issues and goals. All students participate in the school governance process and have opportunities to run weekly school-wide

Town Meetings. The democratic learning community empowers students to take ownership of their learning and their school by transforming power from “Power Over” To “Power With.”

Strategies used at the school include:

- Highly-individualized, consistent support – Weekly *Interdisciplinary Collaborative Block* (assigned according to need) including *CAPT prep*, *SAT prep*, *Resume/College Essay Writing*; *Senior Capstone block*; *College Study block*; *Habits of Success Program*; *Teen Outreach Program*; *Peer Mentoring*; *Credit Recovery* (through *Odysseyware* online courses). Students are scheduled in these support blocks, which are dedicated to addressing individual needs.
- *Connecting Room*: available to students in need of immediate assistance to address problems that are interfering with their engagement in learning. All teachers provide *Connecting Room* assistance.
- *Your Educational Strategies (YES) Contract*: personal contract in which students agree to strategies for success. Parents and guardians also sign to signify their awareness.
- *Service Learning*: one block per week, in which all students participate in clubs, organizations, and activities dedicated to serving the community. Service Learning is a fundamental component of the QMC curriculum, and provides opportunities for students to apply their learning in real-world contexts.
- *Character Assessment and Data*: new in 2012-2013. Based on research that has shown that certain attitudes and dispositions are critical to student learning, students and teachers collaboratively determined aspects of character that lead to academic success and the capacity to be a positively contributing member of society. Assessment of

character is determined by student self-assessment and teacher assessment using criteria in 6 domains.

Through the lens of collaborative problem solving, QMC uses the Town Meeting as the forum for addressing challenges as opportunities to improve the school. Two of the primary challenges confronted each year are attendance issues and CAPT performance. As the data above show, a large percentage of new students come to QMC with high absentee rates and low state test scores. In two of the past three years, these issues were brought to the entire learning community as opportunities to work collaboratively to address these issues, and annual comprehensive improvement plans were developed to address each of these areas.

**Professional Development:** EASTCONN has launched a STEM initiative designed to advance learning in and integration of STEM concepts within and across content areas. An internal group of former engineers and scientists will provide high-quality professional learning opportunities for the region's teachers, and will be partnering with QMC staff to enhance STEM-related opportunities for our students. As an EASTCONN school, QMC is fortunate to have extensive access to high-quality professional development, as well as instructional and clinical supports, through which EASTCONN can provide a supportive environment and learning experiences that address the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs and development of all students. Each year, faculty attend professional development sessions focused on strategies for effective curriculum, differentiated instruction, and assessment development, through the Glasser Institute on enhancing student self-governance and personal responsibility, and using data to address school-wide and individual student learning goals. With the expansion of the QMC STEM curriculum to include a new focus on engineering and advanced manufacturing, the school will

be working even more closely with faculty and staff at QVCC to allow for a close alliance with QVCC's new Advanced Manufacturing program.

### **Charles Barrows STEM Academy**

Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy is the first Pre-k to Grade 8 magnet school in northeastern Connecticut and is hosted by Windham Public Schools. Focusing on the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics will help students gain important cognitive and academic skills, enhancing their ability to think critically, solve complex problems and work collaboratively. The school's teaching methods, state of the art technology, laboratories, classrooms and equipment will provide students with the tools they need to apply effective critical thinking skills to any challenge. Hands-on inquiry will help to motivate students as they gain confidence across academic disciplines and develop a broader intellectual and personal understanding of the world around them. Learning will become more meaningful as personal inquiry stimulates higher level thinking and students investigate real world problems in a stimulating and supportive learning environment. **Magnet Theme Description:** The northeast community to date has very few school choice options, in a rural area with low socio-economic levels and poor academic achievement. The Charles H. Barrows STEM Magnet Academy will serve as an option of educational excellence with a theme orientation that will invigorate an under-performing school system. Parents will have the option to apply to a theme oriented program with a 21<sup>st</sup> century design around STEM education. This high-tech, partnership driven, educational opportunity will serve as the catalyst to excite students about learning and hands-on education within the STEM fields. With time, this will drive improvement in elementary, middle and high school achievement results, ultimately increasing the number of students who apply to

and are accepted at both two- and four- year colleges as well as increasing the number of students who choose to study within the STEM fields.

The purpose of the Charles Barrows STEM Academy is to offer a thematic program based in science, technology, engineering and mathematics that will increase the intrinsic learning motivation of students, thereby improving academic performance and engagement. Students will be exposed to learning through inquiry-based instruction. STEM will be integrated throughout core and non-core content areas. This model of multidisciplinary integration will drive the inquiry and STEM processes. This core instructional model will allow for student-driven instructional practices to facilitate the majority of instruction within the building. STEM education has recently become a catalyst of high quality instruction. Students who study within the STEM fields are well prepared for high school and college entrance with a strong understanding of core academic content and self-driven learning. *“Today, more than ever before, science holds the key to our survival as a planet and our security and prosperity as a nation. It’s time once again we put science at the top of our agenda and work to restore America’s place as the world leader in science and technology.”* – President Barack Obama

The long-term vision of the school is to ensure, through a feeder-pathway, entrance into a high quality STEM high school within Windham Public Schools. The continuation of STEM programming for students will allow for consistency in programming and a vertical alignment of coursework that will support rigorous STEM education.

Some educational features of this new school include: live access to experts from around the globe via the Distance Learning Lab; technology literacy is emphasized through the use of a variety of digital resources, probeware and SMART technology; all students will be exposed to at least 2 world languages; one of these languages beginning in grade 1; opportunities for field

trips service/research projects in partnership with area businesses; and a full range of extracurricular activities, from sports to community-based service projects.

The building itself serves as a STEM learning tool. The new, state-of-the-art, 83,700-sq.-ft school is sited on a sheltering hillside to take full advantage of solar energy. All carefully designed laboratories, classrooms and interior spaces are set around a center courtyard where rain-water runoff is channeled into a natural bio-filtration swale. The swale mimics a perennial stream bed and serves as an outdoor classroom. Other outdoor study areas include butterfly and vegetation gardens. The facility will offer the latest technology equipment in its classrooms and library/media center, as well as in its laboratories for oceanography. **Instructional Methods:** The Charles Barrows STEM Academy will offer a full spectrum of special education programming. The programming will include small group instruction within the classroom, tiered intervention for math and reading, student assistance team, and referral to planning and placement team, if needed. Staffing will include several special education teachers, tutors, OT/PT, social worker, etc. Additionally, the building has been designed to support 3 dedicated special education classrooms. Students with disabilities will be serviced in accordance with their Individualized Education Plan or 504 plan.

Students who are not proficient in English will be tested and identified for ELL services. Based on their ELL level, their program will be implemented to support vocabulary development and language proficiency skills. Students will participate in small group, hands-on, visual representation, etc. to improve their understanding of the English language.

Within the school, a tiered intervention program will assist with addressing the academic concerns of students who fall outside the typical grade level performance. Three levels of academic intervention will be available in both reading and mathematics. The facilitators of

Literacy and Instruction will assist with the process of developing a vertical program of interventions that will meet the needs of students. Summative, standardized, and grade level performance indicators will be used to determine a student's need for tiered intervention. An SAT team will meet with parents to plan academic and behavioral interventions to assist the student. **Professional Development:** Content across all four STEM components will be taught with the goal of full integration into the school's curriculum:

- *Science content and pedagogy PD:* the entire faculty will participate in the CT Science Center's three-year PD program, the "Institute for Inquiry." The goal for this institute is to create long-lasting improvements in science learning for Connecticut students and it focuses on sustainability, rather than simply mere exposure to new teaching strategies. Additionally, MSAP dollars will be used to support science professional development opportunities including two-day training by Delta Education Services, supporting meaningful use of Full Option Science System (FOSS) materials.
- *Technology professional development:* PASCO Scientific will provide a two-day workshop series, with follow-up coaching support for teachers as they implement the use of probe ware technology into their classrooms.
- *Math professional development:* MSAP funds will support teacher attendance at a week-long INTEL Math workshop in Year 2 that will allow them to strengthen their mathematical content knowledge as well as deepen their pedagogical understanding of how students learn mathematical concepts.
- In addition to the above-described STEM-specific professional development, the Charles Barrows STEM Academy plans to offer additional PD opportunities for its teachers and administrators:

*Integrated Curriculum Design:* Dr. Roger Taylor's *Center for Curriculum Excellence* workshop The grade level team leaders have been hired and are currently working to create a unique integrated STEM curriculum. These leaders will benefit greatly from attending Dr. Taylor's workshop, as he is nationally known for his expertise in developing integrated thematic curricula. Teachers will also participate in a two day workshop called *Science Notebooking* during Year One, and a two-day workshop called *Integrating Language Arts & Science* in Year Two; provided by the CT Science Center; EDC's *Classroom Discourse* model presented by Jeff Winokur, a one day workshop followed by coaching throughout the school year. Winokur is a nationally known author for his work in Early Childhood and the importance of Classroom Discourse. To assist in creating and maintaining a school culture that effectively reduces social isolation, the school's faculty will participate in *Responsive Classroom I* training in Year One and *Responsive Classroom II* in Year Two To assist the school in building its capacity to continue providing a high quality, meaningful, and engaging learning experience after the MSAP assistance is no longer available, Grade Level Team Leaders will participate in *Instructional Coaching Institutes* wit Jim Knight, a series of three-day in Years One and Two. Charles Barrows STEM Academy is planning a "looping" system, with each loop having its own Lead Teacher. This teacher teaches a classroom, and is also responsible for serving as Team Leader. With this approach, the school plans to create a leadership role for these master teachers. They will be expected to lead classrooms that are learning laboratories, open for modeling best practices, facilitating weekly data team meetings, as well as coaching other teachers on their team. This approach will allow Charles Barrows to offer a leadership development program within the Windham Public Schools that provides opportunities for current district educators to become school leaders.

## Goodwin Early Childhood Magnet School

The Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School, scheduled to open its doors in the fall of 2013, believes that all children, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or ability, benefit from consistent interactions in high-quality environments. The school further believes that these high-quality environments, while establishing strong social connections with children, build children's brain capacity by capitalizing on the "windows of opportunity" that exist as the child's brain absorbs vast amounts of information.

This school will serve as a "lab" school for Goodwin College's Child Study students, providing classrooms that students can use as observation sites as well as position for internship experiences. This school will follow the latest best practices methods based on research and theory, therefore, undoubtedly providing this "laboratory" experience for Goodwin College's students as well as for other students from surrounding colleges and universities. The presence of student teaching interns will support the magnet school as it strives to offer smaller than required classroom ratios, enrichment activities, and parent education. In addition to an optimum pedagogy and laboratory opportunities, this school will also provide for populations in great need of this kind of education for their children.

The mission of the Goodwin College Magnet School is to: *Educate children in a diverse learning community—Encourage children's development in a multi-dimensional capacity—Foster and facilitate partnerships with families and Offer comprehensive support and services for all children—creating an inclusive environment connected with the greater community.*

**Magnet Theme Description:** The Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School is a Reggio Emilia-inspired school where teachers, parents, families and community members work cohesively to provide an optimal learning environment for young children. This learning

environment will set the stage for children’s learning by focusing on developing the whole child, helping children to become educational risk takers and active participants in their acquisition of information and overall development. Children will engage in valuable learning experiences that develop their social and emotional skills, their physical skills, cognitive skills, and their creative skills. Regarded as an exemplary model of early childhood education, the Reggio Emilia approach “fosters children’s intellectual development through a systematic focus on symbolic representation” (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998, p. 7). Teachers engaged in this model of education design an environment that will facilitate and enhance children’s learning. With each experience, children will actively construct their own understanding of the world and their place in it while using expressive, cognitive, creative, and communicative methods to engage in the learning environment. **Instructional Methods:** Educators in this school will carefully design the classroom environments, paying close attention to every detail so that the environment can become the “third teacher.” In an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere highlighting the beauty of the natural world, children will have opportunities for extended exploration, often in small groups so as to encourage the skills of cooperation and problem solving.

Teachers are viewed as researchers of education. The teacher’s role within this approach is one of complexity. Teachers must see themselves as active learners alongside the children. The teacher furthers the child’s learning by lending experience, expertise, and ideas to the experience. This requires a very diligent practice of observing, listening, and documenting children’s work in order to stimulate thinking and the development of ideas. Teachers in this approach practice the art of “reflective teaching.” Often, they review the day’s occurrences looking for clues from the children as to where to take the curriculum next, for indications as to how the children are progressing both individually and as a group, and for insight on how the environment is adding

to or taking away from the learning experiences. Using the data from this reflection, teachers are able to better design and plan environments, curriculum, and learning experiences for all children in their classes.

Academic goals and objectives will focus on children's overall development across four developmental domains: Personal/Social development, Physical development, Cognitive development, and Creative/Aesthetic development. The learning objectives Frameworks developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education. As a Reggio Emilia-inspired school, particular focus will be on developing children's Personal/Social development, based on the understanding that education and learning begin within each child. The more confident a child feels about him/herself the better the academic risk taker s/he becomes. The more experienced s/he is at problem solving and cooperating with others, the better problem solver s/he will become in academic areas such as math, science, and literacy. The increased feelings of respect s/he feels for him/herself, others, and the world, will help him/her develop into an active citizen who continues to respect the rights of others and of the earth, actively seeking justice and searching for the better conscientiously-aware decision.

The curriculum designed in this school will develop challenging curriculum across the content areas of language arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, The Arts, Health and Safety Education, Physical Education and Technology Education.

Multicultural education is infused within early childhood education settings rather easily. Exposing young children to multicultural environments sets the stage for developing a child who has a wide acceptance for all kinds of people regardless of their skin color, religion, ability, age, etc. The anti-defamation league has put together curriculum ideas about how to broach some of these complicated topics with young children as has the National Association for Young

Children (NAEYC) and many other early childhood organizations. Through regular and deliberate activities, teachers can include a variety of multicultural topics appropriate for children of this age. Since the Reggio Emilia Approach has such a strong emphasis on communal support, it fits in with the philosophy of this program to use a multicultural curriculum. Further, since the Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School has a mission that includes breaking down racial, ethnic, economic, gender, and other social and academic barriers and has values that include respect, empathy, diversity, and a diverse student enrollment with high expectations for everyone, the school's curriculum will contain and solicit multiple perspectives ensuring that student identities substantially influence the curriculum and that the curriculum is designed with social justice/progress in mind.

Students who are proficient in languages other than English are important to the overall diversity and culture of the Magnet School. Since many Greater Hartford residents are of Hispanic heritage, the Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School will attempt to hire Spanish-speaking teachers who have demonstrated an ability to effectively work with both bilingual and non-native Spanish speakers in the same setting.

In addition to students who largely speak Spanish, the school's population will likely also include students whose families are recent immigrants from African countries, Brazil (where Portuguese is the national language), and Eastern European countries. The Magnet school teachers will provide classroom techniques for English Language Learning for children whose native language is something other than English which will enable them to be successful in the academic environment. The Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School will attend to students with all exceptionalities—not just those who struggle. Students with exceptional abilities (broadly or in select ways) are expected to be identified so they can meet their full

potential. The Magnet School shall not discriminate against any student with any ability/disability. The school will work to accommodate the needs of students with all disabilities with the same high level of commitment it will have with special education students.

**Professional Development:** Goodwin Early Childhood Magnet School teachers need to remain cognizant that they are professionals and must strive to create a professional environment for themselves, their peers, and their students. Maintaining a professional environment will be accomplished by: Working collaboratively with administrators, colleagues, and families to maximize student learning. Teachers will also recognize that a student's learning experience includes the family home, the community, businesses, and professional organizations. Committing to reflection and continuous learning. Just as teachers would like their students to become life-long learners, they too must strive to continuously learn. This goal will be accomplished through self- and peer evaluation and continual reflection to assess where and how the teacher may enrich his/her content knowledge, teaching practices, classroom management, and technological expertise. Teachers will also conduct research and network with peers through professional memberships and attendance at local and national professional society meetings. The Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School Professional Development Plan fully commits to the principles and practices of *Connecticut Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development*. Improvement of student achievement is the driving force behind the PD Plan.

In alignment with the Magnet School's focus on the arts/expressive media, the environment as the third teacher, collaboration, and documentation of children's work, significant amounts of professional development will focus on curriculum, assessment, and instruction pertaining to these areas. Teachers will practice reflective practice and use this as a way to improve classroom

environments and instructional techniques. Teachers will be given sufficient planning and evaluating time on a weekly basis in order to organize and develop material best suited for their classroom and student learning. Teacher will also take part in peer-collaborating partnerships as a way to further assessment and observational skills. In addition to the above, every teacher will have an individual professional development plan with goals set both by the teacher and administrators. These goals shall be explicitly based on the core and subject-area competencies of the *Connecticut Common Core of Teaching* and the Magnet School's mission, values, beliefs, and school and student objectives. New teachers will receive additional observation, a peer mentor, and additional preparation time built into their schedules. All teachers new to the Magnet School will engage in a one- to two-week orientation to the school. This initial orientation will include training in how to collaborate effectively and efficiently based on proven methods of structured, on-topic, rule-based, collegial collaboration, including Professional Learning Communities and Critical Friends Groups. Team/department leaders will be tasked with engaging in additional professional development concerning leadership during leadership meetings. Many of the professional development trainings and support groups will be provided by faculty from the Early Childhood Department at Goodwin College as well as from hired professional trainers.

The Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School will strongly encourage teachers to belong to relevant, prominent professional teaching associations and attend state, regional, and national conferences. Teachers will be expected to formally present their conference experiences to their peers.

---

**Quality of Project Design:** (2)(iii) The Secretary determines the extent to which each magnet school ...will encourage greater parental decision making and involvement.

---

In the planning process for this project, the PEACE partners determined that a “one-size-fits-all” approach to parent engagement would not work. Therefore each school is developing its own plan for increasing parent involvement, recognizing the lessons learned from the research. At STMHS, Moriarty, and Goodwin, will be hire staff to coordinate parent engagement. LAMMS will provide a series of parent education/engagement workshops and opportunities. Wequonnoc, Moriarty, STMHS, and Charles Barrows all have/will have School Governance Councils which include family and community members. Reggio Emilia programs are family centered, based on close relationships, mutual respect, and a shared vision of the goals for the children. Parents are actively involved in the governance of a Reggio Emilia school and share the responsibility for student learning. In addition, the PEACE project as a whole will develop a series of on-line/face to face training and education opportunities for parents/guardians/families. Topics will include providing strategies for supporting your child’s educational needs; understanding developmental stages of adolescents; and warning signs/risk factors for parents of teens. The PEACE Advisory will determine the content of the courses and the process/system for its development.

The partners recognize that a key element to effective parent engagement is that they believe that their input is welcomed and valued. The schools are looking beyond “menial” tasks for parents and families and working to identify critical areas in which they can help to make a difference at their school. In so doing, the PEACE schools are confident that they will avoid the pitfalls identified in the research above and will be able to create, implement and maintain authentic partnerships with their families, students and communities. Given the recognized connection between families, schools, and children’s outcomes, PEACE educators will seek increased parent/family engagement and partnerships to support learning at home and in school.

At the same time, research points to an ever-increasing body of evidence that documents that the *quality of the links* between families and teachers and between schools and communities influences student's academic success (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Epstein and Dauber concluded that the most accurate predictor of parental engagement are the steps that a school takes to promote it. (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). PEACE schools adhere to Joyce's Epstein's work regarding parent engagement. Epstein asserts that even the hardest-to-reach parents can become connected if the school and teacher practices are suitable. (Epstein,1995) PEACE schools will implement clear practices and policies on parental engagement.

---

**Budget and Resources:** (1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the adequacy of resources...including the adequacy of the facilities that the applicant plans to use.

---

The facilities that the *Partners for Equity & Achievement in eastern Connecticut's Education* (PEACE) Schools and LEARN will use to implement the program will be adequate and well-suited to the purpose of each magnet program. Four of the PEACE magnet schools are, or will be, housed in buildings designed specifically for their magnet theme, including *New London STEM Magnet High School, Quinebaug Middle College, Charles Barrows STEM Academy, and Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School*. In some cases, there will be special magnet theme related enhancements; these would include *Language and Technology Arts Middle Magnet School, Moriarty Elementary School and Wequonnoc School*. In addition, some of the PEACE schools operate in partnership with area community colleges, which allow these programs to accommodate more students of a more diverse population.

Each school facility has or will have accommodations for disabled students and staff. In designing and designating magnet schools, each building plan is reviewed to ensure that the facility: (1) has the necessary space to accommodate classrooms for instruction and/or specially equipped rooms and areas to support the magnet theme, (2) has space to accommodate students who choose to transfer to the magnet school; and (3) is located in an area that is convenient to public transportation and/or is in close proximity to well-traveled highways for easy access to the surrounding suburbs.

---

**Budget and Resources:** (2) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the adequacy of resources...including the adequacy of equipment and supplies that the applicant plans to use.

---

The equipment and supplies requested from the MSAP for the proposed magnet schools are over and above those available to the magnet schools and are necessary to successfully implement the

magnet schools programs. The computer equipment and supporting technology that has been requested for each of the proposed magnet schools is more advanced than the equipment that is currently in use and is requested because it is necessary to carry out the activities of the project, or is requested when current equipment is insufficient in number to carry out the magnet school themes. Examples of supplies and equipment needed to implement the magnet themes follow:

*LEARN/Program Administrator*: portable presentation equipment, including, for instance, a projector, speakers, and digital camera, in order to provide better recruiting support as well as presentations to teachers, students and community partners; additional computer for use in program management and data analysis. *New London STEM Magnet High School*: Equipment to create an educational Emergency Room Laboratory environment, and Physical Therapy Lab; marketing and recruiting supplies, such as banners, fliers, and videos, to attract students to the magnet school. *Language and Technology Arts Middle Magnet School*: Graphics computers, 3-D rendering technologies, sound studio and stage lighting equipment, and other items specific to the Arts Technology strand; Language Lab equipment to enhance language learning; interactive whiteboards and laptops for expanded teaching opportunities; musical instruments and visual and performing arts supplies. *Moriarty Elementary School*: Outdoor Learning Lab items, including greenhouse, irrigation, weather station and areas designed for experimentation; an interactive Demonstration Kitchen, with video and digital technologies, to serve as a science lab for health and nutrition topics, as well as enhancement of traditional science curriculum; laptops, iPads and wireless networking for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning by young students. Supplies complement the above curricula, with kitchen supplies, science and art-room supplies and classroom reading materials specific to the Environmental Science and Health & Wellness themes. *Wequonnoc School*: Interactive whiteboards & projectors, laptops & iPads, and wireless technologies; video cameras

for the arts program; performing and visual arts supplies; software and teacher reading materials to assist in the integration of the magnet's theme. *Quinebaug Middle College*: A mobile STEM Lab; manufacturing Equipment, for curriculum developed in coordination with its partner, Quinebaug Valley Community College; labs and laboratory equipment for robotics, physics, engineering; and iPads/laptops for enhanced learning; and supplies to support these initiatives. *Charles Barrows STEM Academy*: LEGO/Robotics equipment, heavily used in robotics curriculum; PASCO probeware for science; iPads & laptops for student use; trade journals and materials related to the STEM focus. *Goodwin College Early Childhood Magnet School*: Touch screen monitors for child computer work stations; iPad and app bundle for individualized instruction. Supplies include instructional software to enhance curriculum and extend beyond regular SMART Board software; additional multi-media classroom supplies enhance the Reggio Emilia Curriculum model; additional supplies to enhance the theme of Reggio Emilia, such as communications items, items that bring children closer to nature, etc.

---

**Budget and Resources:** (3) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the adequacy of resources...including the adequacy and reasonableness of the budget for the project in relation to the objectives of the project.

---

The budget for the proposed magnet schools is adequate and reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project. An explanation of specific budget items that have been requested follows.

**a. Personnel:** *Project Director*: The project director will manage all aspects of the MSAP project; Roles filled by personnel requested by the principals, as outlined on the individual school's budget overview, are essential to successfully carry out the magnet school's program at each school. Resumes and/or job descriptions for key personnel are included in the appendices to this filing. **b.**

**Fringe Benefits:** include payroll taxes, unemployment, worker's compensation, retirement, medical insurance **c. Travel Funds** are requested for key personnel to attend Magnet Schools conferences sponsored by MSA and the USDOE, other professional development opportunities at each magnet school. **d. Equipment:** Each item in the equipment requested is essential to successfully carry out the magnet schools program at each school. **e. Supplies:** Each item in the requested supplies, as outlined above and on the individual school's budget overview, is essential to fully carry out the magnet schools program at each school. **f. Contractual Funds** have been requested for an evaluation contractor to conduct an independent evaluation of the project. The evaluation contractor will work with project staff to develop surveys, questionnaires, and conduct formative evaluations and conduct the annual performance reports. The Project Director will work with project partners and consultants to create online professional development to provide support for the PEACE schools across all learning and teaching platforms. Funds have been requested for consultants to provide STEM-related instructional support; access to early college coursework; and professional development on topics such as diversity training, STEM integration, student success, and theme-specific experiential learning. **g. Construction:** No funds have been requested.

This project represents a comprehensive Magnet Schools Assistance Plan for the start-up costs of **4 new magnet schools** and **3 significant revisions/expansions**. The budget is reasonable and adequate to achieve project objectives. Six schools will implement in project year 1 while the seventh will use year 1 for planning and will implement in year 2. The requested budget for the project is \$3,979,313 for the year 1, \$3,946,482 for the year 2, and \$3,927,997 for year 3. The project will serve approximately 1,500 students in the first year, growing to approximately 2,500 students by year 3. **Therefore, the per-pupil cost of these magnet schools is \$2,653 for year 1 and decreases to \$1,571 for year 3 due to increased enrollments.**

---

*(e)Evaluation Plan...*the evaluation plan... 1) Includes methods that are appropriate to the project; (2) Will determine how successful the project is in meeting its intended outcomes...; and (3) Includes methods that are objective and that will produce data that are quantifiable

---

This evaluation, spanning the three years of this project, will assist school staffs and district personnel to modify and improve project performance and produce information needed by the United States Department of Education to properly evaluate project effectiveness.

**Data Collection:** This evaluation will draw on a wide variety of data to provide substance and context for both formative and summative reports. Quantitative, extant data (e.g. enrollment information, standardized test results) will be used in conjunction with questionnaire, interview and observation data, as well with qualitative data (e.g. school improvement plans, curriculum materials, professional development records) to ensure a thorough and balanced evaluation.

The contractor will develop a complete set of data collection instruments (including surveys, document requests, and walkthrough, observation and interview protocols) designed to provide sufficient information to address objectives and performance measures and supplement extant data. However, **extant data will be used whenever possible** to lessen the burden on school based and project staff. The data to be collected will include: **Student achievement, demographic, enrollment and other data:** The contractor will collect standardized test score data (e.g., school and grade level reading, mathematics, writing, science data) needed to address performance measures related to student academic achievement. Enrollment data disaggregated by race/ethnicity collected by the district will indicate the extent to which each school and the project succeeds in meeting desegregation related performance measures including reducing minority group isolation. Applicant pool, student selection and student enrollment data will help

explain the extent to which the reduction in minority group isolation performance measures were attained and help determine how performance in this area can be improved.

**Document requests:** The contractor will request documentation from magnet school teachers and MSAP staff to help determine the quality and extent of MSAP implementation. Examples include: ► **descriptions of and dosage** (amount of program delivered) **for units and courses** that present the magnet theme to students; and **student recruitment, teacher professional development, parent involvement and planning activities (including an implementation plan)**; ► **schedules** of school based magnet staff; ► School improvement plans; **Observation and interview data** will be collected, during three annual visits to each magnet school, by trained evaluators with extensive experience as magnet school practitioners. During each visit, the visitor will conduct a walk-through, observe lessons, and interview teachers, administrators, students and parents.

**Surveys** will be administered annually to all magnet school teachers, a sample of magnet school students and teachers and students at comparison schools. Drawing on its twenty year history of MSAP and regular and rigorous evaluations, American Education Solutions has developed survey items and scales with its survey consultant, Dr. David Silver, a senior researcher at U.C.L.A.'s CRESST Center, and currently, Dr. Jia Wang, a senior researcher at CRESST. *These survey items are directly related to the purposes of the MSAP and the objectives and performance measures of this proposal.* Validated survey items and scales measure constructs including school climate, instructional leadership, professional development hours (formal, collaborative and coaching) and effectiveness, student engagement and motivation, student academic commitment and expectations, student and teacher perceptions of intergroup

relations and magnet theme implementation, standards based instruction and systemic reform implementation and parent involvement as well as magnet and professional development dosage.

**Formative Evaluation and Reporting:** The evaluation contractor will aid in the continual improvement of the project through formative evaluation, an examination of implementation that returns information to project, school and district staff to help them improve program performance. Formative evaluation includes the study of program fidelity (the degree to which a program is implemented as designed) and reach (the proportion of the target group that participates). Components of fidelity include: ► adherence – the degree to which the program adheres to its goals, plans, activities, timeline; ► dosage – the amount of program delivered; ► quality – the quality of program activities and services; ► responsiveness of participants to program activities; ► program differentiation – unique features when compared to non-magnets.

**Formative Evaluation Reporting:** Data will be collected, as available, and analyzed and recommendations discussed with the project director and school staff throughout the year.

**Five formative evaluation reports** will be written by evaluators each school year:

**Reduction of Minority Group Isolation (MGI) Report:** Demographic and enrollment data will be compared with applicant pool, student selection and other data from the previous school year and with performance measures. By November, discussions related to the attainment or partial attainment of performance measures related to the reduction of MGI will help the district and magnet schools modify recruitment strategies and activities to attain better results. (Were MGI outcome targets attained? Was MGI reduced? By how much? Why?)

This report is updated in late spring when new applicant pool and student selection data is

analyzed and compared with school enrollment data to determine the success of these activities and create plans of action to improve results, if necessary. Measures of fidelity include adherence to the implementation plan, recruitment plans and student selection criteria and procedures; and dosage, the “amount” of recruitment. Quality and responsiveness will be determined by changes in school enrollments, especially for entry grades, and the size and diversity of applicant pools. Differentiation will examine if unique program features were implemented and adequately described to the target audience. This report not only informs the district about its successes in meeting desegregation performance measures (1.1-1.5) but also explores reasons for progress or lack of sufficient progress and possible remedies.

**Site Visit Reports:** Site visits, described above, are opportunities to feed back data related to the development and implementation of the magnet theme. After each of three annual site visits, a report will be written by the site visitor and submitted within ten days. It will summarize the findings of the visit and include recommendations for improvement. Site visitors will discuss recommendations with school and MSAP staff during each visit. **Documentation Reviews,** included in all three site visit reports, will summarize descriptive and quantitative data related to magnet curricula, systemic reforms, parent activities and professional development, and report on: adherence (e.g., activities implemented on schedule), dosage (e.g., the amount of time students, teachers and parents are exposed to grant activities such as magnet units and courses, professional development and parent activities), quality (e.g., peer reviews of magnet related units and courses). The combined site visit report/documentation review summarizes how much progress has been made towards attaining performance measures especially those related to magnet theme and systemic reform implementation (2.1, 3.1), professional development (5.2) and fidelity of implementation. The reports, distributed to and discussed with school staff three

times each year, helps them to understand if they are on track to attain the intended outcomes of the project, including performance measures and if not, why and how the project activities can be improved.

**Survey Reports** will include item by item results for each school, summaries of survey construct results for each school, and, for years two and three, comparisons between current and the previous year's results. Trends (e.g., relationship between magnet implementation and student engagement and motivation, between professional development dosage and impact) are explored.

**Summative Evaluation and Reporting:** The evaluation contractor will determine the extent to which annual objectives and performance measures are attained. Data sources were described above. The evaluation contractor will collect and analyze the data, prepare two annual performance reports and one final report summarizing findings, and discuss the results with district and magnet school staffs. The following section summarizes the means through which evaluators will assess the attainment of performance measures (PM) which are listed the *Plan of Operations* section of this application and summarized below:

**PM 1.1-1.4** Reduction of minority group isolation (MGI) at each magnet school meets annual targets.

**PM 1.5** For each project year, the PEACE schools expect that they will receive at least 100 applications, with some schools receiving more than 500 applications. **Assessment:** School enrollment data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity will be used to determine the degree of attainment of 1.1-1.4. Applicant pool and student selection data will be used to determine if 1.5 was attained and explore how performance can be improved for all measures.

**PM 2.1:** Each School Improvement Plan will include activities and objectives supporting the adoption of high standards for all students and systemic reforms coordinated with MSAP activities. **Assessment:** Success will be determined through inspection of each school's plan. Implementation success will be measured by performance measure 3.1.

**PM 3.1:** All magnet school students will receive magnet theme instruction coordinated with systemic reforms for at least 3 (year 1), 6 (year 2) and 10 (year 3) hours per week. **Assessment:** Success will be determined through unit plan analysis and confirmed with surveys, interviews, and walkthroughs. Units and lessons will be peer reviewed to determine quality. Responsiveness will be determined by surveys which assess student engagement and motivation, academic commitment and expectations, student and teacher perceptions of school climate.

**PM 4.1-4.3:** State proficiency standards (SPI goals) will be met for each school's total enrollment in: **4.1** reading; **4.2** mathematics; **4.3** writing; **4.4** science; and the SPI goals combining all subjects for: **4.5** entire school enrollment and each subgroup. **4.6-4.7** At each magnet, the percent of students from major racial and ethnic subgroups who score proficient will increase each year in **4.6** reading. **4.7** mathematics. **4.8** Writing. **Assessment:** All students are tested in April of each school year. Data is analyzed by the State Education Department and will be presented in the Annual Performance Reports in tabular form, highlighting the performance targets and how each magnet school – both in aggregate and by subgroups – performed in relation to these targets.

**PM 4.9:** In each magnet school, 75% of students will master the magnet curriculum. **Assessment:** School and magnet staffs will develop, by the end of year one, methods to assess student mastery of magnet curricula. Project director and evaluator will approve methods.

**PM 5:** Magnet school teachers will receive 30 hours of professional development related to **5.1:** systemic reforms and **5.2:** 30 hours related to magnet theme development and implementation. **Assessment: (5.1, 5.2)** Magnet staff will collect professional development data including the type of training, the number of hours provided and the number and names of teachers involved. Quality will be determined through survey analysis and interviews, walkthroughs, etc.

**PM 6.1:** At least 75% (yr. 1), 85% (yr. 2) and 95% (yr. 3) classes (elementary) or STEM classes (secondary), will reflect their grade's enrollment for each racial/ethnic group and males and females by  $\pm 15$  percentage points. **Assessment:** Success will be determined through analysis of class enrollments disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender.

**PM 6.2:** There will be an increase in parent participation at each magnet school each year. **Assessment:** Workshop materials, attendance records and parent interviews will determine parent participation and satisfaction.

**Annual Evaluation Schedule:** ► Initial meeting with project and district staff (Week 1); ► Refine data collection instruments and plan; refine analysis plan; (Weeks 1-3); Collect data (Throughout year): Enrollment data (Week 5); Site visits including interviews and observations (Weeks 10, 22, 34); applicant pool data (Week 28); Dosage data (ongoing); Surveys administered (Week 34); Survey results reported (Week 38); Documents collected (e.g. units integrated with magnet theme - Weeks 9, 21, 33); ► Formative evaluation including discussion of recommendations (Weeks 3-40); MGI Report (Week 10) MGI/Applicant Pool Update (Week 31); Site Visit-Document Review Reports (Weeks 12, 24, 36); ► Analyze and process summative data (Weeks 34-36); ► Prepare Annual Performance Report (Weeks 36-37); ►

Submit report to school District (Week 38). Week 1 is the week the project begins each year.

### **Rigorous Evaluation of Magnet School Assistance Program**

The rigorous evaluation design proposed below (please see appendix for a more detailed version) will be carried out by researchers at UCLA's Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). The goal of this design is to measure MSAP impact on student achievement with the statistical rigor of a high-quality quasi-experimental design, but to do so with attention to limitations of available data and sample sizes, and to do it on a scale that is reasonable within the current funding structure.

The goal of the rigorous evaluation is to measure Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) impact on student achievement. Using a statistically rigorous, high-quality quasi-experimental design, we examine two broad questions:

1. How did students attending target MSAP schools perform on state tests in relation to matched students at comparison schools in the same district?
2. How did *different subgroups* of students attending these MSAP schools perform in relation to matched students at comparison schools in the same district?

This evaluation strives to bolster the current body of research with instrumentation and analytic methodology aligned directly with the priorities and selection criteria of the Magnet Schools Assistance Program.

We will select comparison schools within the district based on how closely they match the characteristics of MSAP supported schools in the year prior to magnet implementation using hierarchical cluster analysis. Specifically, the comparison school selection will take into consideration the grade span of the school, school size based on enrollment, school racial

composition (i.e., percentage of Black and Hispanic students), the percentage of ELL students and the percentage of NSLP participants.

To identify comparison students, the research team will first restrict the pool of MSAP and comparison students to those that had achievement outcomes for each outcome year and may also limit the students to be at the same MSAP or comparison schools for a period of time. A covariate balancing propensity score will then be computed for the eligible comparison students. Students from each comparison sample will be matched to MSAP students with similar propensity scores using a technique known as radius matching (Huber, Lechner, & Wunsch, 2010).

Our research will examine the effect of MSAP implementation by comparing outcomes of students in MSAP schools to the counterfactual condition of how they would have fared if they had not been a part of the MSAP program. This effect is known in the literature as the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) (Ho, Imai, King, & Stuart, 2007). We will use regression analysis to examine this effect for each student's achievement outcomes. Specifically, we will examine the effect of prior student achievement on each student's achievement outcome (i.e., standardized tests).

In other words, controlling for prior achievement in both the matching model and the analysis model increases the robustness of the estimates. The average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) effect is determined from the size and direction of the magnet effect coefficient. A counterfactual estimate can then be obtained by subtracting the ATT effect from the average observed score of an MSAP population in an outcome year. This counterfactual represents an estimate of how these students may have fared if they had not been a part of the MSAP program and had instead attended a control school.

The combination of the rigorous evaluation described above with data from surveys developed by CRESST and AES, and the evaluation site visits and documentation and data reviews by AES provides districts with additional insight into the extent and quality of their MSAP implementation as well as the value the MSAP program has added to its schools.

Ho, D., Imai, K., King, G., & Stuart, E. (2007). Matching as nonparametric preprocessing for reducing model dependence in parametric causal inference. *Political Analysis*, 15, 199–236.

Huber, M., Lechner, M., & Wunsch, C. (2010). *How to control for many covariates? Reliable estimators based on the propensity score*. IZA discussion paper 5268.

---

**Commitment and Capacity:** (1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine whether the applicant is likely to continue the magnet school activities after the assistance under the...

---

The PEACE partners are fully committed to the successful implementation of the PEACE project as outlined in this proposal. In its July 9, 1996 *Sheff v. O'Neill* decision, the Connecticut Supreme Court determined that *de facto* segregation in the Hartford public schools violated the state's constitution. As a consequence, the court ordered the **entire state** to implement measures to remedy the unlawful segregation. As such, the **entire state of Connecticut** was placed under mandatory court order to remedy the racial isolation that exists across the state. The most recent settlement (June 11, 2008) is a four-year plan relying on voluntary measures with calls for Connecticut to support magnet schools and other programs to promote racial balance. LEARN, New London Public Schools, Norwich Public Schools, EASTCONN, Windham Public Schools and Goodwin College are committed to carrying out the activities of the PEACE project in support of the full implementation of the *Sheff v. O'Neill* settlement.

Because a large component of Connecticut's plan to address the issue of racial isolation and school segregation (as highlighted in the *Sheff v. O'Neill* case) focuses on the development and implementation of magnet schools, the state has committed significant funding to support this work. During fiscal year 2011 the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) invested \$235 million in operating grants to support the operation of 70 magnet schools. The State has invested more than \$2.5 billion overall in magnet school construction projects. Currently there are 73 magnet schools in the state. The state has invested approximately \$114 million in construction funds for 4 of the 7 PEACE schools. The school districts of E Connecticut have invested more than \$16 million in tuition to magnet schools over the past three years. Transportation to the magnet schools is provided by home districts or consortia of home districts. Each of the PEACE magnet schools will receive financial support in a very substantive manner for their longevity, as CSDE will support the continued operations of these schools. CSDE provides a per pupil reimbursement for magnet schools that meets the legislative mandate of reducing minority group isolation. PEACE schools will receive approximately \$8,000.00 per student for operations when fully operational.

Interestingly, CSDE only supports magnet schools outside the Hartford area once they are operational. CSDE does not fund planning or start-up, capacity building, or significantly revised/expanded curriculum or magnet school scope for magnet schools outside Hartford.

CSDE funding is determined on a per pupil dollar amount based on total enrollment from each feeder district. The state provides grants for magnet school capital and operating costs and a subsidy for transporting students to schools outside their home districts.

Before July 1, 2003, the state reimbursed up to 100% of the eligible capital costs for an interdistrict magnet school. Since then, the reimbursement rate has been 80 to 95%.

Reimbursements are made through the state's regular school construction grant program and process.

The state also assists with transportation for students attending a magnet school from outside the town where the school is located. Funding is provided through the normal school transportation grant program for students transported to magnet schools in their home districts and through a separate grant per student for students transported out-of-district. Expenditures over the reimbursement limit may be submitted for reimbursement in the following year in the normal school transportation grant; however this additional reimbursement is always dependent on the availability of funds.

Local funding support for the magnets schools is also strong. However local funding does not begin until the school is operational. Local funding is based on a per pupil tuition as mentioned above. Local foundations have supported special projects at magnet schools through the years also. These include:

- Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
- Frank Loomis Palmer Fund
- Bodenwein Foundation
- Pfizer, Inc.
- Mobil Corporation
- Dominion Educational Partnership
- Target Foundation
- Dime Savings Bank Foundation
- Chelsea Groton Bank Foundation

As stated earlier, neither the state or local funding supports planning, start-up, or significant changes to curriculum or magnet school scope. However, this support is available for regular operations for the longevity of the schools. Local and state efforts exist to work with the State Department of Education and legislators to review the funding formula for the operations of the school as a means for increasing per pupil dollars, which is necessary to keep up with rising budgetary expenditures.

---

**Commitment and Capacity:** (2)(i) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant is committed to the magnet schools project.

---

LEARN is not a magnet school newcomer, as it currently operates 6 magnet schools in its region, serving a total of over 1500 students. One of these schools, the Regional Multicultural Magnet School, recently celebrated its 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, and opened five years **before** the Sheff v. O'Neill case brought attention to the serious nature of minority group isolation in Connecticut's schools. EASTCONN operates 2 magnet schools. And Goodwin College, with its *Institute for Magnet and School Choice Excellence*, brings tremendous experience, knowledge and commitment to the successful development and ongoing implementation of meaning magnet school programs.

Through the State's commitment to effective magnet programs, LEARN, Goodwin, and EASTCONN, and NLPS have created high performing schools. These program allow students the opportunity to attend racially diverse, higher performing schools that would not exist if not for these magnet programs. LEARN, EASTCONN, New London Public Schools, Norwich Public Schools, Windham Public Schools, and Goodwin College are fully committed to this proposal and have concrete plans for funding these schools after MSAP funds are no longer available, because these partners know they work.

---

**Commitment and Capacity:** (2)(ii) The Secretary determines the extent to which the applicant has identified other resources to continue support for the magnet school activities when...

---

This proposal is designed to build and strengthen the capacity of the 7 PEACE schools to continue the magnet programs after assistance under MSAP is no longer available. Key to this sustainability is an extensive PD program, which seeks to build capacity at each school with coaches, STEM specialists, and on-line learning opportunities. PD hours are a performance

measure that will be closely monitored by the project director and outside evaluators. Project Objective 5 states that the project will: “Provide professional development for magnet school teachers related to systemic reforms and magnet theme development and implementation.

The framework for the PEACE PD plan, as it relates to systemic reform, will be the Connecticut’s Reform Model created to provide coaching, support, and PD that will accelerate the learning of students and close the achievement gap. Embedded PD will include demonstration lessons and coaching provided by STEM/theme resource teachers, curriculum development and writing facilitated by magnet resource teachers and collaborations among classroom teachers. The PEACE schools will also be engaged in extensive curriculum development as well as alignment leading in curriculum to be available for teachers to continue each school’s unique magnet instruction and curriculum once Federal funding is no longer available. After the programs are firmly established as a result of the training and curriculum development and alignment activities, the 7 PEACE schools will maintain these programs using local, and State funds. As a result of the *Sheff* decision, Connecticut is committed to provide funding to maintain these schools. The five inter-district magnet schools in the PEACE project have been approved by the State Department of Education and have approved operations plans, so that these schools will receive increased State aid for the students who attend them. In addition to state magnet funds, and per capita state aid for students discussed above, Hartford, Windham, New London, and Norwich receive dollars in Connecticut State Priority School Aid.. In addition, the State of Connecticut will support regional magnet schools capital expense funds, necessary expenses that the Magnet Schools Assistance Program does not cover. The State of Connecticut will spend about nearly \$300 million for magnet schools throughout the state this year. The 7 PEACE schools will conduct comprehensive searches of Federal, state and private funding sources using the USDOE website, the National Science

Foundation website, the Foundation Directory and other funding sources. LEARN, EASTCONN, New London, Norwich, Windham, and Goodwin College are committed to magnet schools because they know they work by providing high quality programs and diverse schools that will lead their students to successful futures.

---

Competitive Preference Priority 1: *Need for Assistance*: The Secretary evaluates the applicant's needs... (a) The costs of fully implementing the magnet schools project as proposed.

---

**PEACE** (*Partners for Equity & Achievement in eastern Connecticut's Education*) is a consortium of seven inter-district and intra- district magnet schools serving students from across eastern Connecticut. With the assistance of Magnet Schools Assistance Program funds, PEACE will reduce and further prevent minority group isolation in four Connecticut communities (Hartford, Windham, New London and Norwich) through the development of three new STEM-focused magnet schools and the significant expansion and revision of four existing magnet schools.

LEARN is submitting this proposal on behalf of the PEACE partner LEAs. As the Regional Educational Service Center for southeastern Connecticut, LEARN has the capacity and experience to effectively carry forth the proposed plan and fully supports the state of Connecticut's desegregation plan. The State of Connecticut takes the matters of racial segregation very seriously. The state Supreme Court decisions of 1996, 2003 and 2007 ordered that the state create a plan to address segregation in schools in Hartford and throughout Connecticut. Based on legislation passed in 1996, 2003 and 2010, the State Department of Education has created and implemented a plan for school choice with a number of critical elements. Since 1996, when the Connecticut State Supreme Court determined in *Sheff v. O'Neill* that public school students in Hartford were attending schools that were economically, ethnically, and racially isolated, in a clear violation of Connecticut's constitution. As a result, the State of Connecticut was placed under **mandatory court order** to remedy the statewide experience of racial isolation. In so doing, the court ordered the Connecticut General Assembly to address these disparities.

Forced by the Supreme Court's **mandatory order for a response** to the situation identified in *Sheff v. O'Neill*, laws were enacted that offered both suburban and urban students the opportunity to attend schools of choice in an effort to ameliorate the racial isolation of all students. The State of Connecticut does not supply funds for magnet school **program development, staff professional development, curriculum development** or **equipment** needed for the special magnet programs such as STEM. There are great disparities in the funding structures for magnet schools not in the Greater Hartford area. For example, the per pupil magnet reimbursements are higher in the Hartford area and significantly less in the rest of the state.

One of the primary pieces of Connecticut's School Choice Plan has been the development of new inter district magnet schools. These magnet schools, created when two or more districts combine their ideas, skills, and resources to create a new school, center around a unique or unusual theme specifically designed to foster both excellence in academics and the reduction of racial, ethnic or economic isolation. Both the state and the *Sheff v. O'Neill* plaintiffs (whose lawsuit led to the 1996, 2003 and 2010 legislation) recognized that the "magnet school is an excellent method of reducing this isolation." School districts additionally have the option to create intra-district magnet schools to further decrease the racial isolation of students within their communities. Charter Schools and Open Choice options complete the picture of Connecticut's plan to improve racial isolation and student achievement across all of the state's LEAs.

Connecticut has long been recognized as a state of many contradictions, exemplified by the characterization of the "*Two Connecticuts*": extreme wealth and deep poverty; wide racial diversity and significant isolation; large divides between student achievement and failure. Connecticut's children have vastly different educational experiences marked by significant

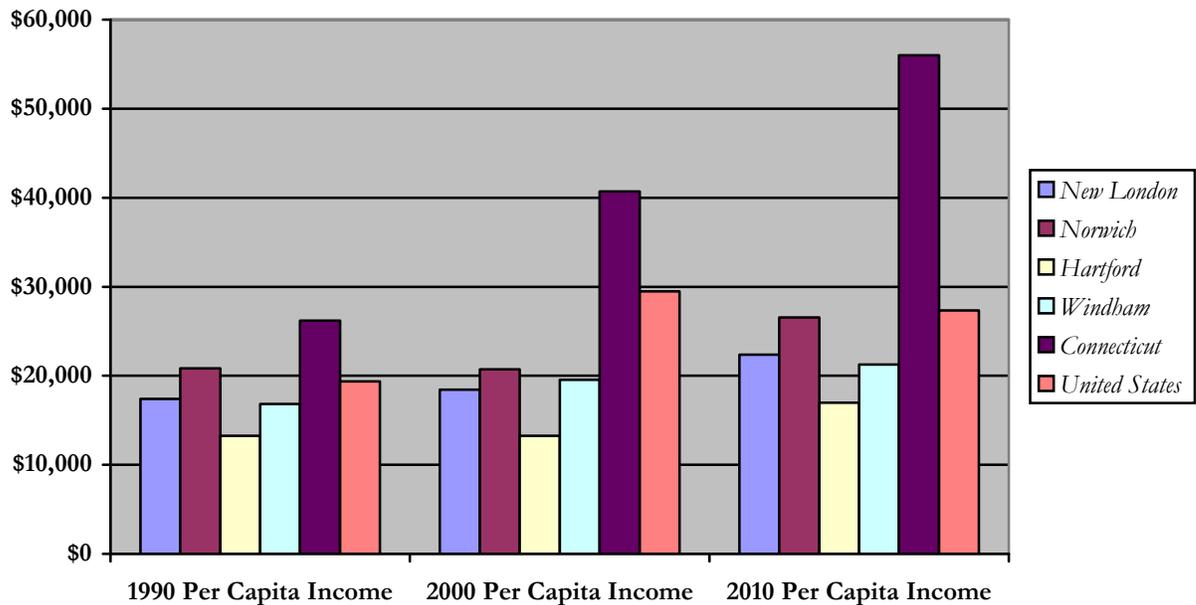
disparity in available resources. Connecticut is one of the wealthiest states in the country, with the greatest percentage of households earning \$200,000 or more a year (7.87%) and yet the disparity between the poor and wealthy is getting worse. According to a 2008 study from the Economic Policy Institute and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, income in Connecticut increased by \$52,439, or 45%, to \$169,378 for the top fifth of Connecticut households, while the bottom fifth's income decreased \$4,437, or 17%, to \$21,133, from 1989 to 2006.

A depiction of “*Two Connecticut*” by Gerald Tirozzi, (Connecticut State Education Commissioner from 1983-1991) described Connecticut as **two communities – one largely white, suburban/rural, and affluent with strong educational systems, and the other largely low-income, minority, urban with poor educational systems.**

By 2002, the Norwich Bulletin article “Tale of Two Connecticut” continued to make this case: “*In eastern Connecticut towns and cities, Connecticut’s status as the richest state based upon per capita income is known but not seen . . . The median household income of families in the New London metropolitan region increased by just \$1,200 from 1999-2000, or \$1,800 less than the national rate.*”

Today, the picture remains grim. **An alarming danger signal for the four PEACE magnet communities (New London, Norwich, Windham, and Hartford) continues to be the combination of poor performance and the low economic base of its students and their families.** Not only are students not performing well on Mastery and Academic Performance tests, but the community resources to support education are also a major factor in this disparity. As documented in the following table, the disparity of income in these four communities continues to erode from the 1990 census figures to those from 2010.

**Table #1: Per Capita Income 2000 - 2010**



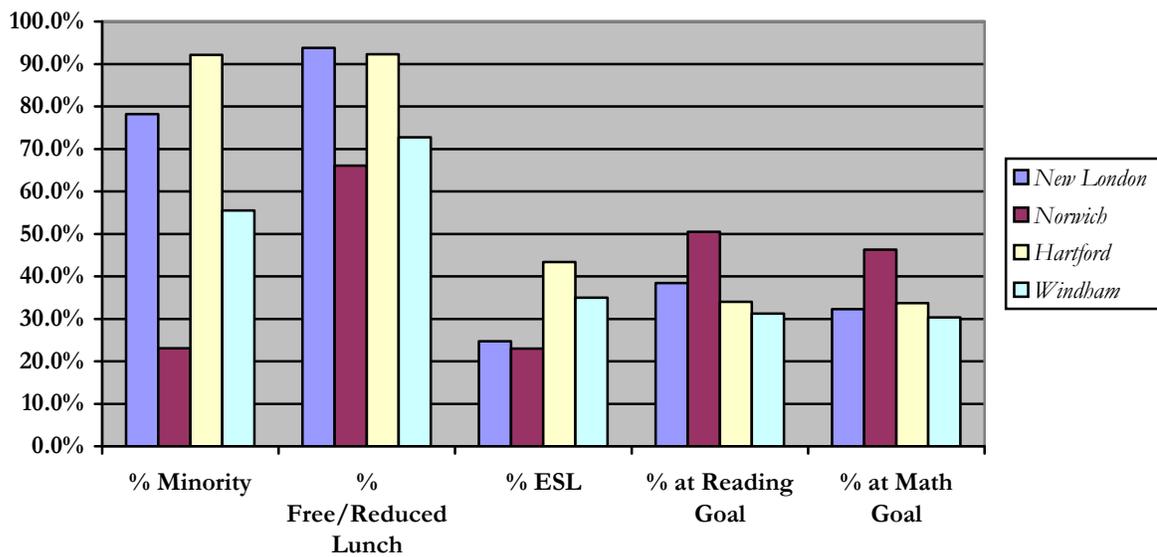
Poverty, racial isolation and lack of skill mastery place disadvantaged students from Connecticut’s urban communities at-risk academically, economically, and socially.

An additional dynamic in eastern Connecticut relates to the State Department of Education’s December 2012 notification to the Groton Board of Education that the *existing Kolnaski (Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade) intra district Magnet School is racially imbalanced and ordered them to develop a plan of correction*. The state of CT defines a racial imbalance in a district as one school having more than a 25% difference in demographic populations from the other schools in the district. Given its housing patterns, Groton racial balance plan has a re-districting component and takes into account Groton students’ attendance at interdistrict magnet schools across the region. “The powerful, reciprocal connection between school and housing segregation has long been recognized. The housing-school link was a key element in both the 1968 Kerner Commission report and in the legislative history of the Fair Housing Act. The relationship between school and housing segregation was also explored in a series of school segregation cases beginning in the 1970s. Yet in spite of HUD’s duty to “affirmatively further fair housing,” and a parallel

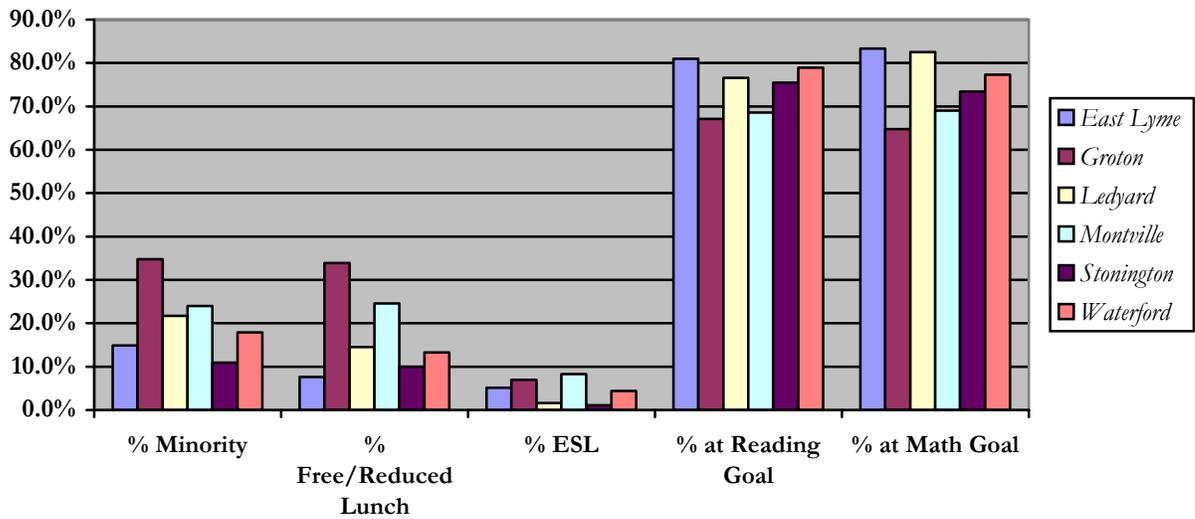
“compelling government interest” to reduce of school segregation, there have been few examples of effective coordination between housing and school policy in the intervening years.” It is as if the previous quote from Philip Tegler, Executive Director of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council was speaking directly to Groton and the four primary communities of this proposal. One intended consequence of PEACE is to assist Groton with this plan by drawing students from Groton to one of the surrounding magnet schools, thereby supporting their efforts.

To document the wide scope of differences across Eastern Connecticut the following charts demonstrate the disparities in income, isolation and achievement experienced by the four PEACE magnet communities and their surrounding suburban/feeder districts:

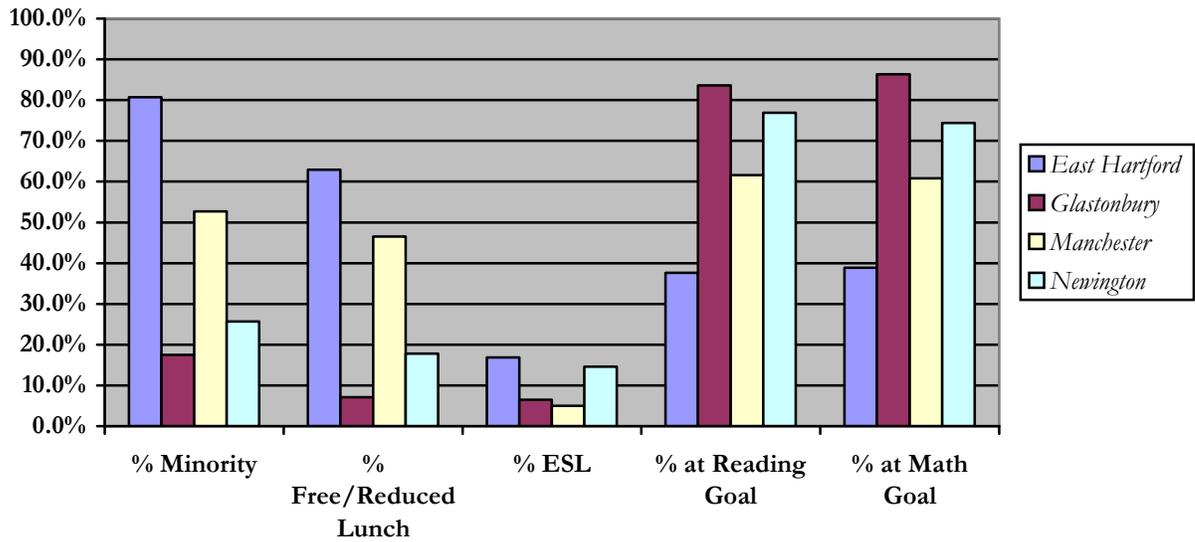
**Table #2: Characteristics of PEACE Magnet Communities**



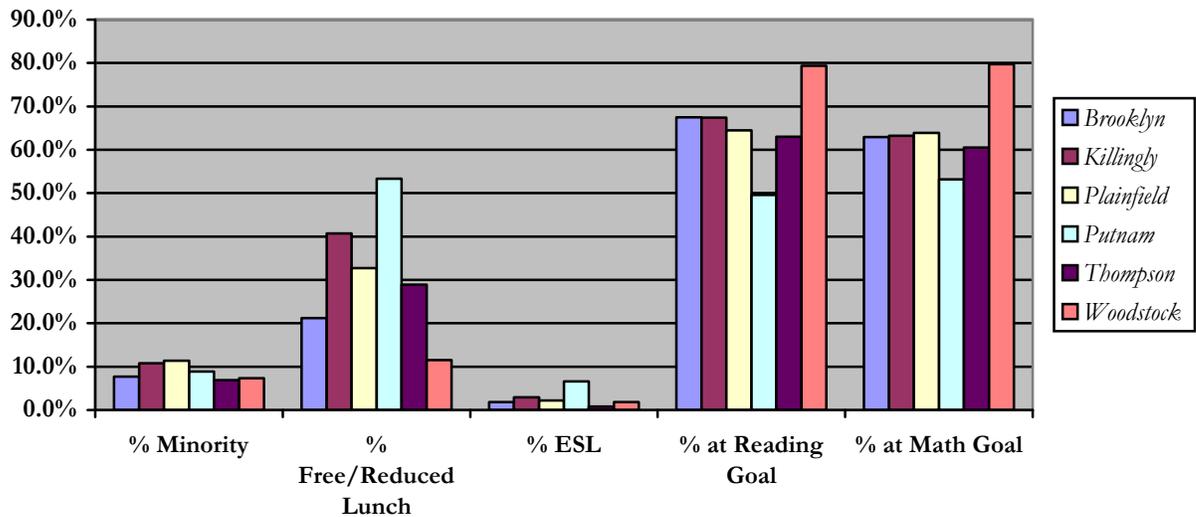
**Table #3: Characteristics of New London Feeder Districts**



**Table #3: Characteristics of Hartford Feeder Districts**



**Table #4: Characteristics of Windham Feeder Districts**



It is clear that the isolated PEACE LEAs demonstrate a number of critical educational needs, including low-income families, high percentages of families for whom English is not their primary language, and low rates of success on Connecticut’s standardized tests. The schools in these PEACE communities have fewer resources to provide critical services and opportunities for their students because of weaker tax bases than their surrounding suburban districts. Furthermore, the four PEACE host districts are districts that are defined in the approved CT NCLB waiver. Based on their performance and other mitigating factors all the districts are identified as Alliance districts, all the districts have Focus and Review Schools and both Hartford and Norwich have Commissioner Network Schools and Windham will have a Commissioner Network School next year. In addition, Windham and New London were assigned a Special Master to oversee the school district and the Board of Education. These distinctions and oversight are not complements; they are a result of continued challenges that have led to ongoing limited student achievement. By almost all accounts, the need in the four PEACE host communities is critical, most notably in the area of academic achievement. Students struggle to

reach their full potential; and resources, which could help make a difference, are severely limited. Additionally limited local and state resources make it challenging, if not impossible, to develop effective and lasting solutions to these disparities. It is feared that without these MSAP dollars, the PEACE schools will not meet the goals set forth in this proposal nor those from the State of Connecticut. Efforts to effectively recruit and retain students will be hampered; professional development activities will not be as robust and rigorous as needed; and meaningful assessments will be limited as the result of decreased resources.

**The requested MSAP funds will allow the PEACE magnet schools the necessary resources for new and significantly revised/expanded program needs while also building their capacity to continue eastern Connecticut's successful efforts to decrease racial isolation while simultaneously improving student achievement.**