



Hartford System of Schools

**Choice Plan
Frequently Asked Questions
March 3, 2008**

1. What do you mean by a “Choice Plan?”

- Providing more school choices is a critical part of the plan to improve our schools and increase student achievement
- The Choice plan will provide options for families based on student needs and interests

2. Why do we need more change?

- HPS is one of the lowest performing districts in the State of Connecticut
- Our large comprehensive high schools lack personalization, we have too few high achieving schools and there are limited school choices that are aligned with student interests
- Funding for students is not equal
- We want to provide stability and predictability of school attendance based on place of residence and increase opportunities to strengthen neighborhoods by anchoring them with strong schools
- We want to increase parental engagement in their child’s education
- We need to provide incentives for families to stay in Hartford rather than seek educational options outside of Hartford

3. What are some of the advantages of the Choice Plan for my child and my family?

- Every child deserves the same opportunity for a great education. That means, every child must have a choice of a school that meets their needs/interests.
- The current process of student assignment has fallen short of its promise of an equitable education for each child. It’s time for a change. That time is now.
- Advantages include:
 - Small learning communities
 - Theme-based Academies relating to student interests
 - Increased parent empowerment and involvement
 - School models with demonstrated success will be employed
 - A rigorous college-ready curriculum
 - Enhanced teacher and staff commitment
 - Build meaningful relationships
(Rigor, Relevance, Relationships)

4. How will Choice work?

- Students can choose schools at different grade levels
- Students currently enrolled in a school may stay at their current school
- If there are more applicants than seats available, a set of preferences determines school enrollment
- A new transportation system will facilitate a district-wide Choice system
- The specific application process can be found on our website: www.hartfordschools.org
- Consultation with our Registrar's office is also available; call: (860) 695-8839

5. What are some of the specific changes happening in 2008-2009 school year?

Elementary Schools

- Four new choice elementary schools: Achievement First Hartford Academy, Breakthrough II Elementary School, the International Baccalaureate/Say Yes Academy and Montessori Elementary School will open for Hartford families. These exciting new schools are all based on models of highly-successful schools.

Secondary Schools

- Grade 8 students will have eight high school options from which to choose:
 - Bulkeley Lower School
 - Capital Preparatory Magnet School (Few seats available due to 6th grade admission)
 - Classical Magnet School (Few seats available due to 6th grade admission)
 - Hartford Public High School Freshman Academy
 - University High Magnet School
 - Weaver High Freshman Academy
 - Pathways Magnet School
 - Sport and Medical Science Magnet School

NOTE: Promotion to the 9th grade is dependent on the completion of a Choice School application

- Grade 9 students can choose from a portfolio of themed schools depending upon their unique interests. Choices include:

Bulkeley High

- Lower School at Bulkeley High (9-10)
- Upper School at Bulkeley High (11-12)

Hartford High

- Engineering & Green Technology Academy (10-12)
- Law and Government Academy (10-12)
- Nursing Academy (10-12)

Weaver High

- Weaver (10-12)
- Culinary Institute (Start up) (10-12)
- Redesign of Weaver with two independent schools of 400-600 students, East and West

6. What happens with Special Education and ELL students in the Choice process?

- Students will follow the same process as all Hartford students, and the required services will follow the student to any school chosen.

- Miriam Morales-Taylor, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Support Services, has been appointed by the Superintendent to specifically address the needs of our Special Education and ELL students. Ms. Taylor can be contacted at 860-695-8600.

7. What happens with Homeless or Foster students in the Choice process?

- Students will follow the same process as all Hartford students; the living status will not impact their opportunity for choice. They would receive the same preferences as all students.
- Barbara Burke, Student Transition Liaison, has been appointed to specifically address the needs of our homeless and foster students. Ms. Burke can be contacted at (860) 695-8409 or email her at burkb001@hartfordschools.org.

8. How are the school zones defined?

- The Board passed policy, No. 5116 in July of 2007, directing the Superintendent to establish zones in Hartford to enhance transportation and school choice.
- The criteria used to determine a zone include:
 - Equal balance of the grouping of schools (Elementary, Middle and High Schools)
 - Sensitivity to cultural and historical neighborhoods
 - Districted around any existing infrastructural barriers (Parks, etc.)
 - Existing boundaries

9. What types of transportation options are available?

- Eligibility for free transportation is determined by the following distance requirements:
 - Grades Pre-K - 5: ½ mile or more
 - Grades 6 -12: 1 mile or more
- Transportation is available for students in grades K-12 for regular school hours only
- Parents of Pre-K students must provide transportation for their children
- Transportation Request Forms must be completed at the time of enrollment at the school

Collaboration + Innovation = School Success