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PRESS RELEASE

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NEW HARTFORD MAGNET SCHOOLS TO BE DEVELOPED WITH HARTFORD FOUNDATION GRANT

Hartford, CT – The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving has awarded the Hartford Public Schools a \$100,000 matching grant to support its new Office of Magnet Schools. This office will coordinate the development of eight new magnet schools in Hartford over the next four years.

The Office of Magnet Schools will work in collaboration with the State Department of Education and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) to develop the magnet schools.

As interdistrict “host” magnet schools, they will be operated by the Hartford Public Schools. They differ from the more common interdistrict magnet schools that are operated throughout the State by regional education service centers, such as CREC, in that a majority of the students will be from Hartford. Each of the new “host” magnet schools in Hartford will adopt a particular academic theme or focus that will be infused throughout the curriculum in all grades.

"The Foundation's support for Hartford's magnet school program is greatly appreciated. Receiving this grant at this particular point in time, as the district is expanding the number of magnet schools and establishing a new Magnet School Program Office, is critically important to the likely success of these initiatives," said Ed Linehan, Director of the Office of Magnet Schools.

Hartford Public Schools plans to convert two of its regular schools per year to magnet schools. The first two will be the Greater Hartford Classical Magnet, which will be temporarily housed at Hartford Public High School, and the Pathways to Technology Magnet, which will be temporarily housed at the Metropolitan Learning Center in Bloomfield. The State of Connecticut recently approved \$61 million to develop new facilities for these two schools.

"Putting the PUBLIC back into Public Education"

Hartford Public Schools' effort to develop at least eight new magnet schools is part of a settlement agreement between the State of Connecticut and the plaintiffs in *Sheff v. O'Neill*, and is intended to reduce racial isolation in the Hartford Public Schools.

At least 30% of the students in each of the new host magnet schools will be from suburban school districts. One of the goals of this effort is to increase the number of suburban students who are enrolled in Hartford schools from 370 last year to 1,400 by the end of 2005-06.

An equally important goal is to increase the number of Hartford students attending high-quality, integrated schools, such as magnet schools. Last year, 800 Hartford students attended such a school (mostly interdistrict magnet schools). When the eight host magnet schools are operational, it is anticipated that this number will increase to 7,200 (or 30% of the Hartford student population).

The one-year grant from the Hartford Foundation was matched by the State Department of Education. Additionally, Hartford Public Schools and CREC will provide substantial, additional in-kind staff contributions.

"This effort represents an exciting opportunity for students in our region," said Chris Hall, Director of Programs for the Hartford Foundation. "The Hartford Foundation is pleased to support Hartford Public Schools' plan to provide quality, integrated education to students in the City of Hartford and its suburbs."

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Capitol Region, devoted to building successful partnerships with donors and nonprofits to enhance the quality of life for people in our community. For more information about the Foundation, visit www.hfpg.org or call 548-1888.

For more information about the Office of Magnet Schools, contact Ed Linehan at (860) 695-8546.