



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



October 8, 2013

Leslie Moriarty, Board Chair
Greenwich Board of Education
Havemeyer Building
290 Greenwich Avenue
Greenwich, CT 06830

Dear Ms. Moriarty:

I am writing in response to your inquiry surrounding the application of the "unique school" status to New Lebanon and Hamilton Avenue Schools in Greenwich, which are partial intradistrict magnet schools. The regulations define "unique school" as including an interdistrict or intradistrict magnet school. The rationale behind allowing for the exclusion of unique schools is that these schools do not have control over the racial composition of their student populations and would not be able to provide a remedy for racial imbalance.

The statutes do not specifically define the term "intradistrict magnet school." The concept of an intradistrict magnet is that the school offers a specialized program that is designed to draw students from all areas of the district. When conducting the annual racial imbalance report, certain schools are automatically excluded from the list as being "unique schools." Such schools do not appear on the State Department of Education's racial imbalance report. These unique schools include the charter schools, the technical high schools, alternative schools, special education facilities, interdistrict magnet schools, and intradistrict magnets that allow for full voluntary enrollment (such as the magnet schools existing in the Hartford and New Haven School districts). Therefore, in order to be automatically excluded from the racial imbalance requirements for the "intradistrict" category of "unique schools," such school must provide for full voluntary enrollment, meaning that the school must draw its students from a district-wide applicant pool rather than drawing students from the school's defined attendance zone. It is my understanding that the vast majority of the students attending both Hamilton Avenue and New Lebanon Schools are assigned based upon their residency in the attendance zone for each school.

While the regulations also allow for the Commissioner to designate a school as a "unique school," your schools have not been so designated by previous Commissioners. If you were to request such designation going forward, I would expect your schools to meet a high standard with respect to voluntary enrollment and to be part of a coherent and compelling district plan before, in consultation with the State Board of Education, making such a designation.

Leslie Moriarty
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Thank you for your continued commitment to this process and your pursuit of excellent educational opportunities for all of Greenwich's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stefan Pryor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stefan" being more prominent than the last name "Pryor".

Stefan Pryor
Commissioner of Education

SP:la

cc: Dr. William McKersie, Superintendent of Schools
Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer
Mark Linabury, Bureau of Choice Programs
Laura Anastasio, Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs