



The National Association for Magnet and Theme-based Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hartford Public Schools Awarded District Award for Magnet Sustainability

Washington, DC May 7, 2016 – Magnet Schools of America (MSA) is proud to announce that Hartford Public Schools was selected as the recipient of the second Donna Grady-Creer District Award for Magnet Sustainability during the 34th National Conference on Magnet Schools in Miami, FL. This annual award acknowledges a school district that exemplifies a commitment to equity, excellence, diversity, as well as highly sustained support for magnet schools. It is sponsored by MSA board member and first president, Dr. Judith Stein. Donna Grady-Creer was one of the original founders of Magnet Schools of America. She served as President from 2000-2002 and continued her service on the Board of Directors until her passing in 2013.

“We are honored to be the recipient of the Donna Grady-Creer award and to be recognized as Magnet Schools of America’s school district of the year,” said Hartford Public Schools Superintendent Beth Schiavino-Narvaez. “On behalf of our students, family and staff I would like to thank Dr. Judith Stein for her enduring commitment to promoting quality magnet schools and to the MSA Executive Board for bestowing Hartford Public Schools with this honor. In the spirit of this award honoring Ms. Grady-Creer, we pledge to keep alive her legacy as a visionary leader, putting children at the center of our work.”

Hartford Public Schools currently has 20 magnet schools that feature theme-based programs such as Nursing and Health Sciences, Arts, Engineering and Technology, Government and Law, and many others. In 2016, 11 of the district’s 20 magnet schools were recognized as either Magnet Schools of America Schools of Excellence or Distinction. Last year, Breakthrough Magnet received the Dr. Ronald P. Simpson Merit Award, which is considered the most prestigious merit award by MSA. In 2014, Pathways Academy of Technology and Design was honored with the American Education Solutions, Inc. Secondary Magnet School of Merit Award.

Hartford Public Schools is a recognized national leader in socioeconomic and racial integration. Its magnet schools are an important component to achieving these goals and closing the achievement gap. They were created under the long-running, court-ordered *Sheff v. O’Neill* desegregation agreement. According to 2014 data reported by the Connecticut Department of Education, nearly half of the students in the Hartford region attend integrated schools, which are defined as such because they have at least 25% whites. In 2007 only 11% of Hartford students were in schools considered integrated.

On top of that, data shows that, on average, the region’s 7 interdistrict magnet high schools have significantly higher graduation rates than even some of Hartford’s more affluent suburban districts. Magnet schools also do a much better job at graduating students from families with low incomes. The graduation rate for low-income students in magnet programs ranges anywhere from 80% -90%, while graduation rates of low-income students in Hartford’s non-magnet schools ranges from 50-60%. The share of Hartford resident students meeting or exceeding state goals on mandated tests is also typically 20-40 percentage points higher in magnets or Open Choice programs.

For more information about the Donna Grady-Creer District Award for Magnet Sustainability, please contact Legislative and Communications Manager, John Laughner at communications@magnet.edu

MISSION STATEMENT

Providing leadership for high quality innovative instructional programs that promote choice, equity, diversity, and academic excellence for all students.