

Open Choice in West Hartford: Past, Present and Future

West Hartford Board of Education
February 17, 2016

Open Choice Program Overview

Interdistrict, public school program



Celebrating 50 years of Project Concern/Open Choice

Opportunity for Hartford students to attend
non-magnet district schools in suburban towns

Reflections on Project Concern

"Threats & fear...Those kinds of things, for me today, shaped what I wanted to be. I wanted to use my voice and talent to make sure that didn't happen again,"

-Monica Bisgaard

"[I] knew that it was going to be out of my comfort zone but I did it anyway."

-Concetta Lewis,
Project Concern Alum



"I was accepted but I still was slightly on the outside sometimes."

-Gerald Waite
Project Concern Alum

"I had to prove myself at school and prove at home that I belonged..."

-Eyvonne Parker-Bair
Project Concern Alum

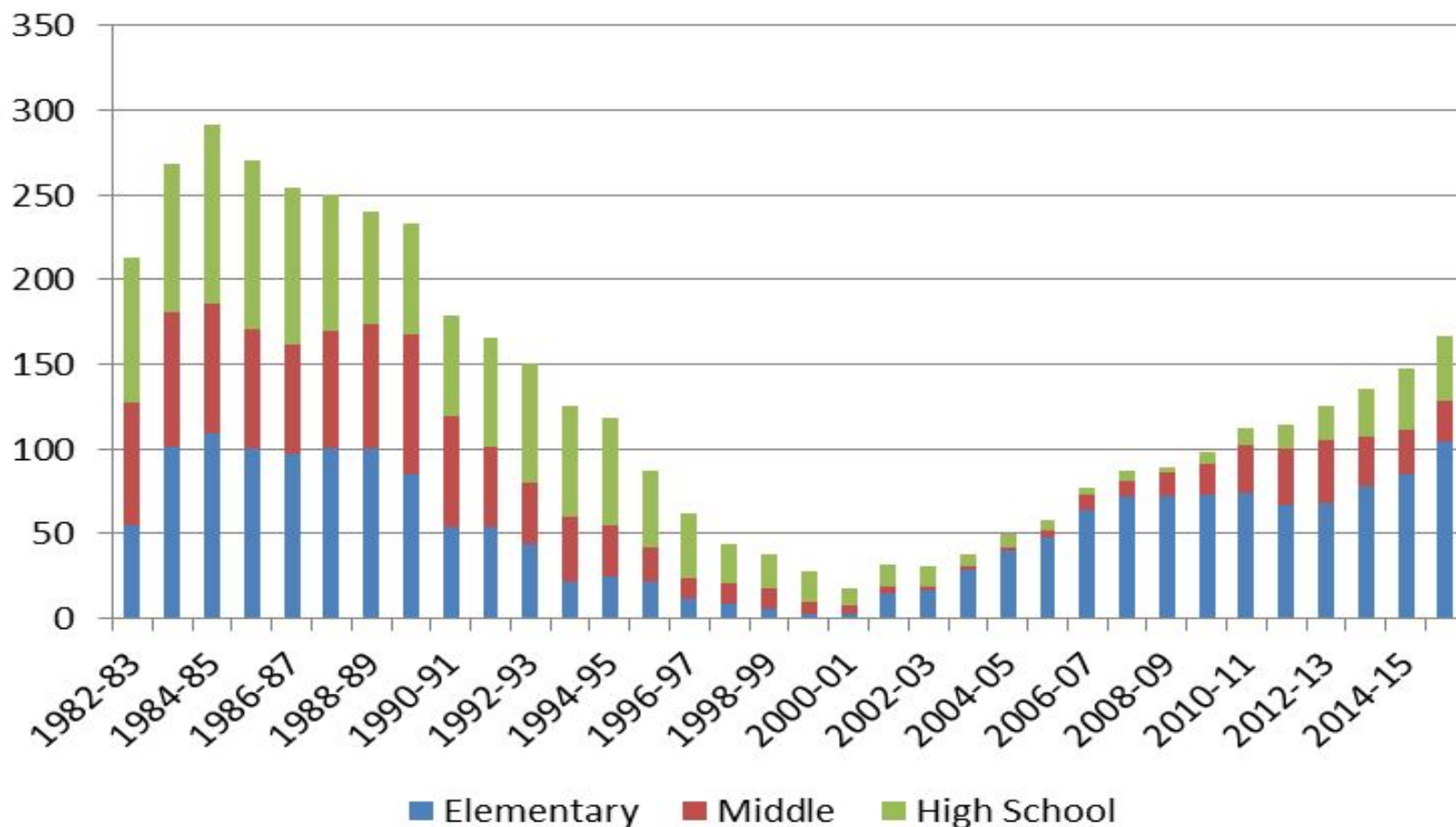


Open Choice Program Goals

- Improve academic achievement
- Reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation
- Provide a choice of educational programs for public school students in the Hartford region

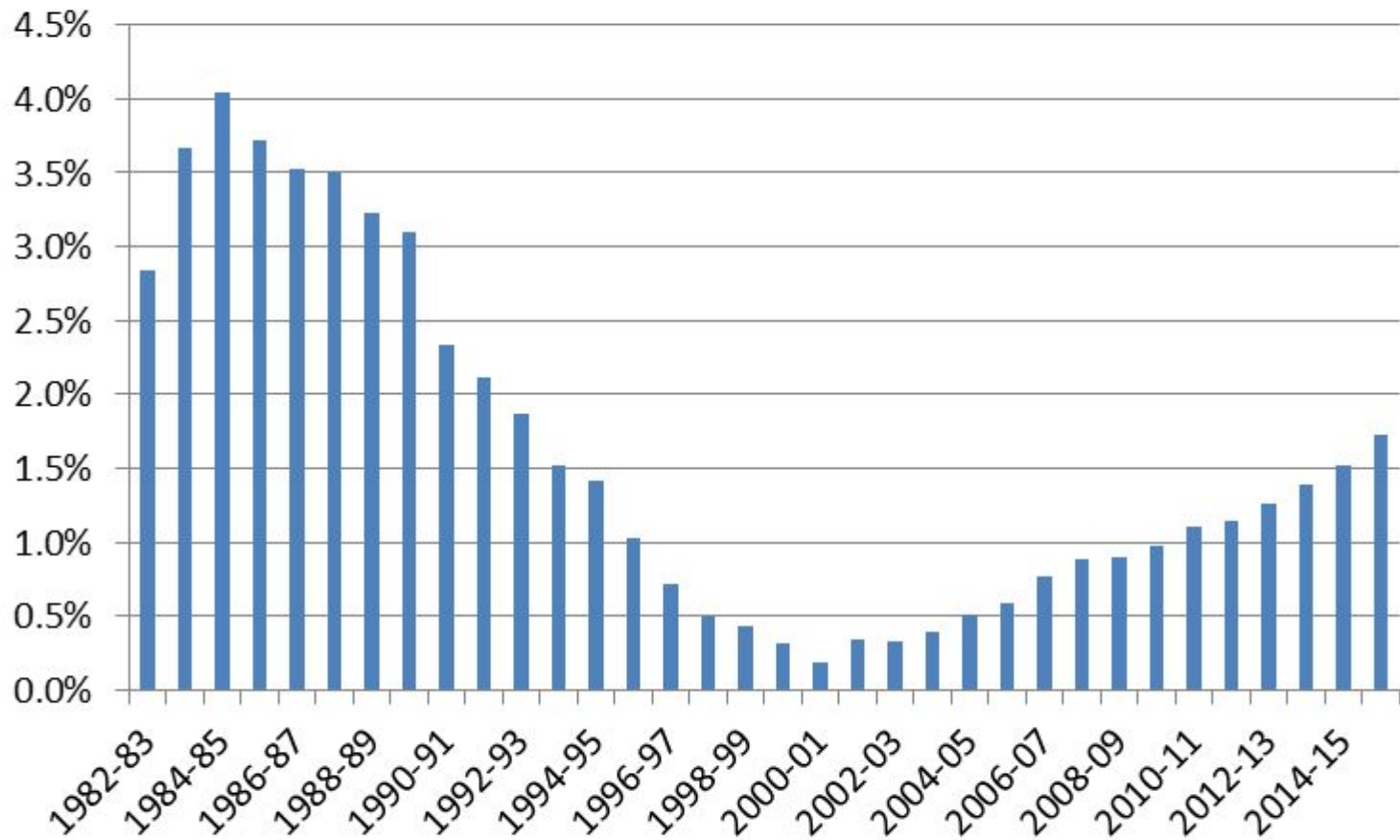
Enrollment Trends

Open Choice Enrollment in WHPS



Enrollment Trends

Percent Open Choice in WHPS



Enrollment 2015-2016

WHPS Open Choice lottery applications = 1155
WHPS Open Choice enrollment (Oct 2015) = 166

Elementary seats (104)	Middle school seats (24)	High school seats (38)
<i>Aiken, Braeburn, Bugbee, Duffy, Morley, Norfeldt</i>	<i>Bristow, King Philip, Sedgwick</i>	<i>Conard, Hall</i>

Funding Sources and Allocation

- CSDE Open Choice Grant
- CSDE *Academic, Student and Social Support, Supplemental, and Targeted Professional Learning Grants*
 - Math intervention tutors
 - Grade K-2 transition support
 - Open Choice Family Engagement Consultant
 - Stakeholder needs-assessment
 - Professional learning on research/best practices (e.g. family engagement)

Needs-Assessment Findings: Parent Feedback



- Relationships with teachers => academic success
- Transportation challenges
- Pathways for student/family connections
- Racism and bias teacher training

“Parenting isn’t an easy feat, and this is a mere testament of all of our hard work.”

-Jessica,
Open Choice Parent

Needs-Assessment Findings: Teachers/Staff



- Home-school communication
- Timely access to student information
- Support service needs
- CREC transportation
- Communication with Open Choice staff re: enrollment with siblings



VOICES OF OUR STUDENTS

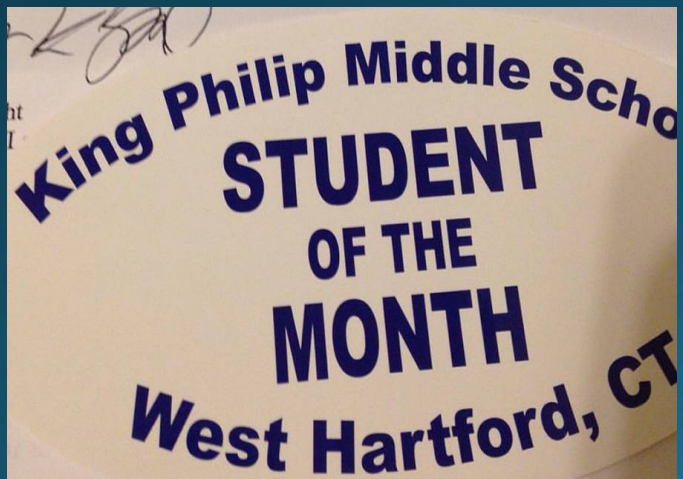
"The rags of life... it is time to turn our rags into robes for the world to admire."

-Henley Solomon,
2015 Graduation Speaker



"I was truly blessed to have the privilege to attend schools where I was accepted, loved and included as my white counterparts."

- Stacy-Ann Wallen,
2014 MLK Celebration Speaker



"I am grateful for the opportunity to get a great education through the Choice program."

-Jayce, Gr. 8

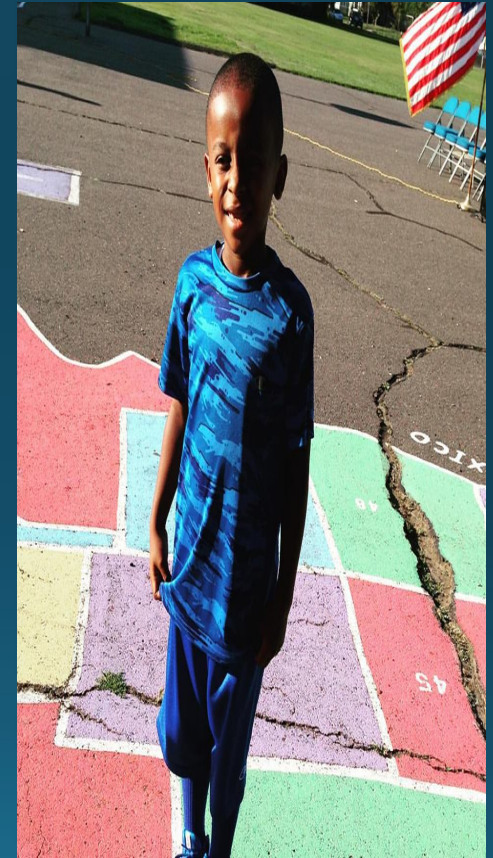
WHPS Vision for the Open Choice Experience

Clear Paths. Bright Futures. No Limits.

- Academic challenge and success through a high quality rigorous curriculum
- A culture and climate where students feel safe, cared for, valued, welcomed and included
- Social interactions and lasting friendships that foster awareness of and respect for differences

The Future of Open Choice in the West Hartford Public Schools

- Welcoming students and families
- Access and opportunities
- Priority focus of Equity & Diversity Council
- Interagency collaboration
- Lottery timelines and orientation
- Registration processes (siblings)
- Transportation systems



“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

~ Maya Angelou

QUESTIONS?

