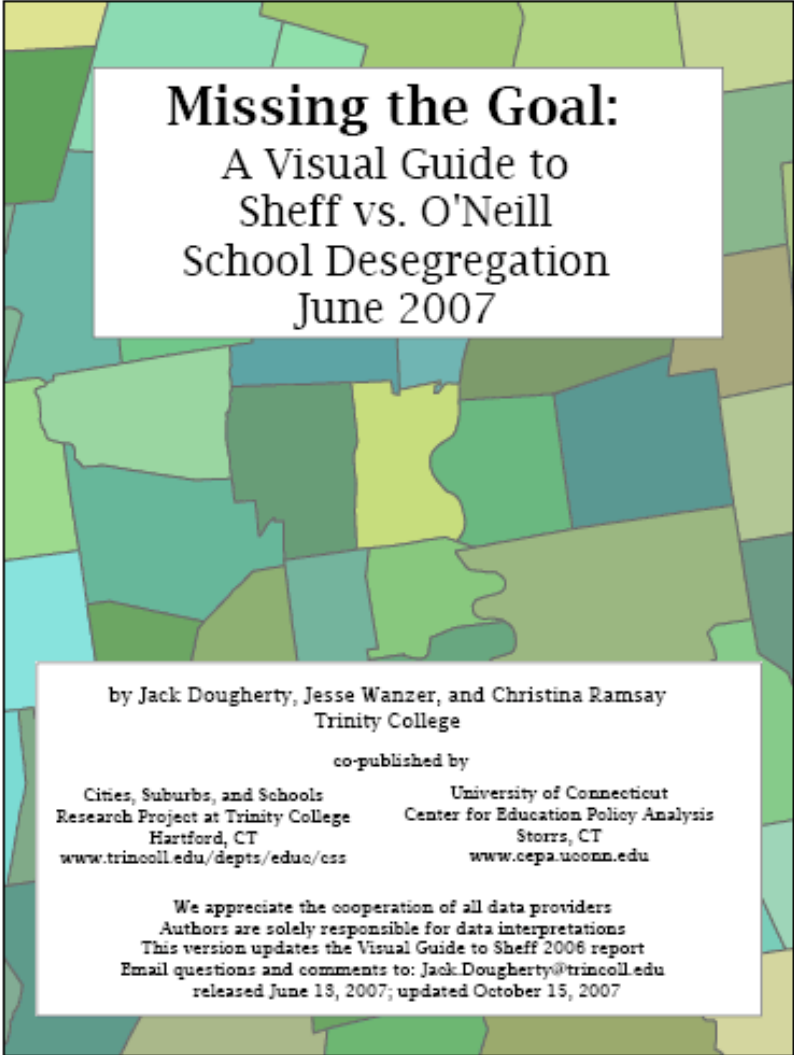


Magnet schools in Hartford: The intersection of race and school choice among applicants.

Jesse Wanzer
Educational Studies Senior Research Project
Trinity College



Missing the Goal:
A Visual Guide to
Sheff vs. O'Neill
School Desegregation
June 2007

by Jack Dougherty, Jesse Wanzer, and Christina Ramsay
Trinity College

co-published by

Cities, Suburbs, and Schools
Research Project at Trinity College
Hartford, CT
www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ/css

University of Connecticut
Center for Education Policy Analysis
Storrs, CT
www.cepa.uconn.edu

We appreciate the cooperation of all data providers
Authors are solely responsible for data interpretations
This version updates the Visual Guide to Sheff 2006 report
Email questions and comments to: Jack.Dougherty@trincoll.edu
released June 13, 2007; updated October 15, 2007

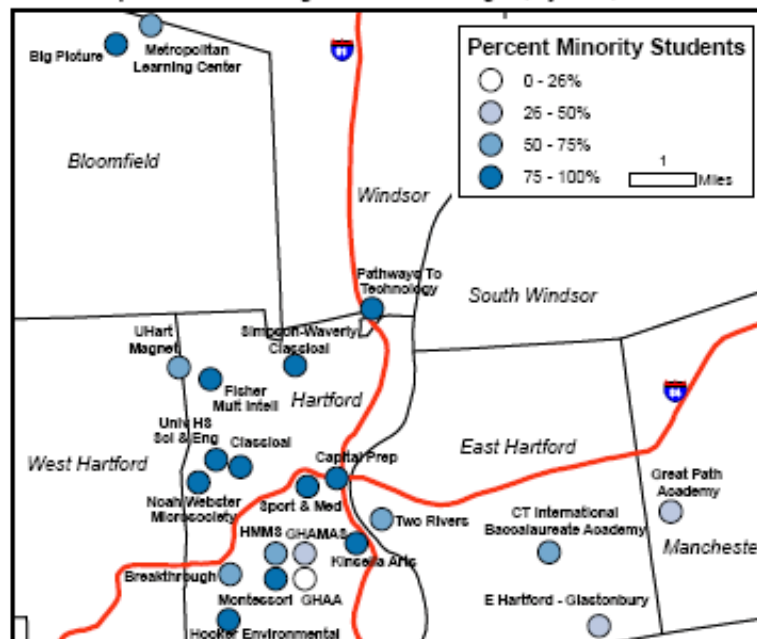
Which magnet schools count toward the Sheff goal?

At present, 22 interdistrict magnet schools have been opened, offering a wide range of curricular specializations designed to attract students from both city and suburban districts. Most are managed by the Capitol Region Educational Council (CREC) or the Hartford Public Schools (HPS), with two others managed by suburban districts.

But not all magnet schools count toward the Sheff 30% goal. According to the 2003 settlement, a magnet qualifies if its proportion of minority students does not exceed an annual limit, calculated as the percentage of minority students in the entire 22-district Sheff region (currently 44%) plus 30 percentage points, for a total minority student limit of 74% in 2006-07. However, the settlement exempts schools from this limit during their first 3 years of operation. The state legislature approved the Sheff legal settlement in February 2003.

Still, while a magnet school may fail to meet the 2003 Sheff standard, it may continue to receive state funding. In May 2002, the state legislature amended CT Statute 10-264L, which currently holds that magnet schools established prior to July 2005 are not limited to the proportion of minority students they enroll (but those created after July 2005 must enroll between 25 to 75 percent minority). The existence of different state-approved racial standards for magnet schools has led to considerable confusion on this important policy issue.

Map 3: Interdistrict Magnets in Hartford region, by Race, 2006-07



Which magnet schools count toward the Sheff goal?

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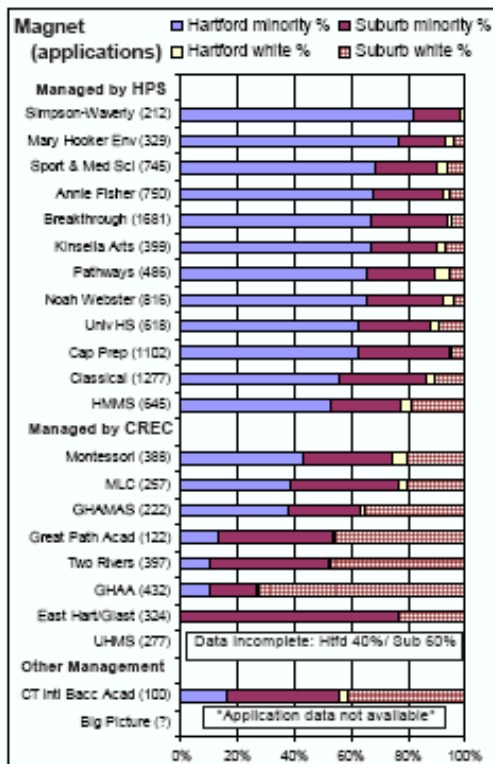
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Who applies to magnet schools?

Chart 3: Magnet applications, by race and residency, 2006-07



Source: Spring 2007 magnet lottery data from CREC, HPS, and individual schools (CT International Baccalaureate Academy; Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts).

Magnet school application patterns also vary considerably from school to school. This chart presents application data in three sections (HPS magnets, CREC magnets, and other district magnets), since all have different marketing and application policies and practices.

At the two extremes, Simpson-Waverly received the highest percentage of applications from Hartford minority students (82%), while Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and Two Rivers tied for the lowest (10%). Regarding applications from white suburban students, Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts received the highest share (72%) and Simpson-Waverly the lowest (0%).

Note that two magnet schools (East Hartford-Glastonbury and Big Picture) do not enroll any Hartford students, and detailed application data was not available for Big Picture, Great Path Academy, Greater Hartford Academy of Math & Science, and University of Hartford Magnet School.

Furthermore, the magnet school receiving the highest total number of applications was Breakthrough, with 1,681. According to the spring 2007 lottery data we received, approximately 43 students (or 2.5% of those who applied) will attend Breakthrough in fall 2007. Another 235 names were removed from the Breakthrough application list because they were admitted to other magnet schools. As a result, nearly 1,400 students remain on Breakthrough's waiting list. Unfortunately, incomplete data prevented us from comparing acceptance rates and waiting lists across all magnet schools.

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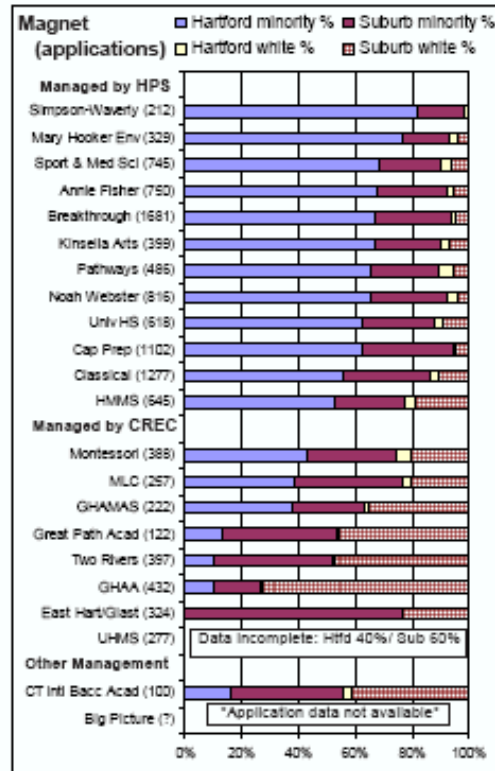
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What questions can be asked with these types of data?

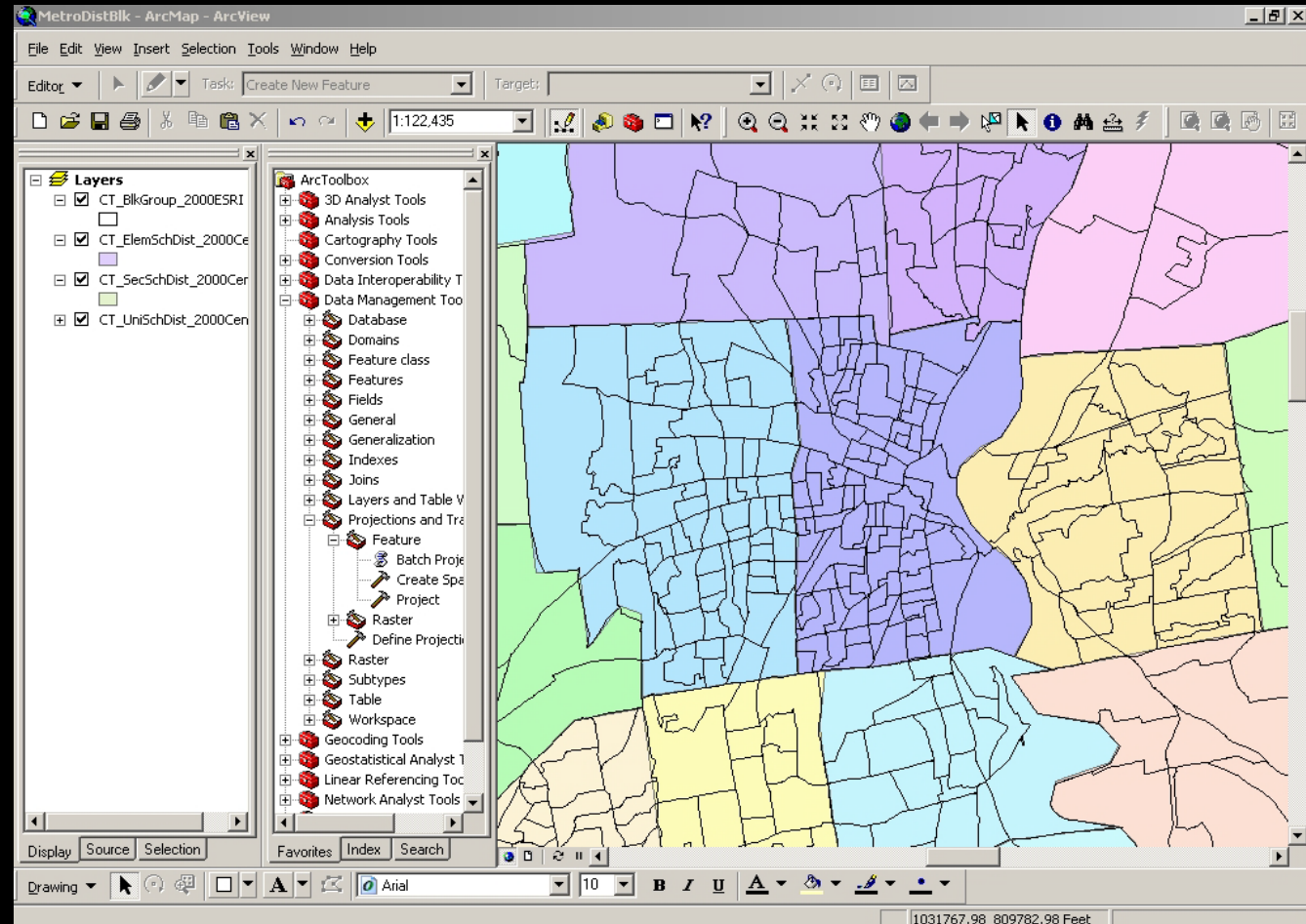
Research Questions

1. Is there a strong relationship between the rate of magnet applications and school CMT scores in Hartford?
2. Do applications to HPS elementary magnets vary across different Hartford neighborhoods?
3. Are magnet applications statistically representative of the racial demographics of neighborhoods in which they reside?
4. Do magnet schools vary in their degree of magnetism?

How can these types of questions be answered?

How can these types of questions be answered?

Researchers use Geographic Information System software (like ArcGIS) to conduct spatial analysis of demographic patterns in magnet school applications or enrollments




Previous work using GIS

- Private, charter, and magnet schools help perpetuate racial isolation. (Saporito, 2006)
- Black and Hispanic applicants are more or less likely to apply depending upon where they live in Hartford (Estevez, 2006)

How does the current study differ?

- Neighborhood level study
- Focuses on Black-Hispanic relationship
- Analysis of six HPS elementary magnets


Methods: GIS geocoding at the neighborhood-level

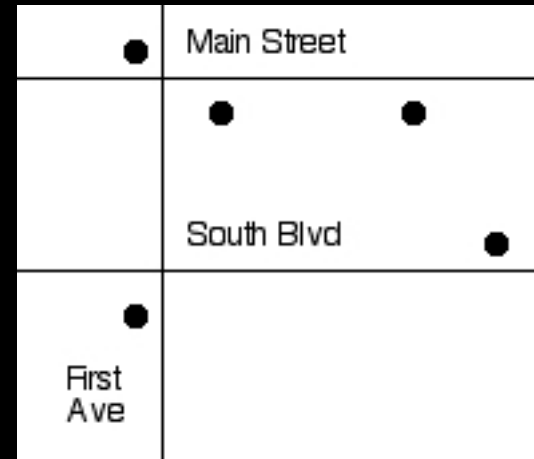
	A
1	Applications
2	35 Main St
3	606 First Ave
4	58 South Blvd
5	49 Main St
6	500 First Ave

	Main Street
	South Blvd
First Ave	

Link data to street map


Methods: GIS geocoding at the neighborhood-level

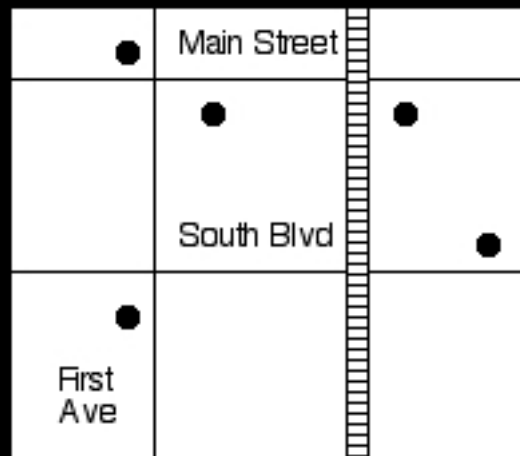
	A
1	Applications
2	35 Main St
3	606 First Ave
4	58 South Blvd
5	49 Main St
6	500 First Ave



Geocode
street address data
as individual points
on map


Methods: GIS geocoding at the neighborhood-level

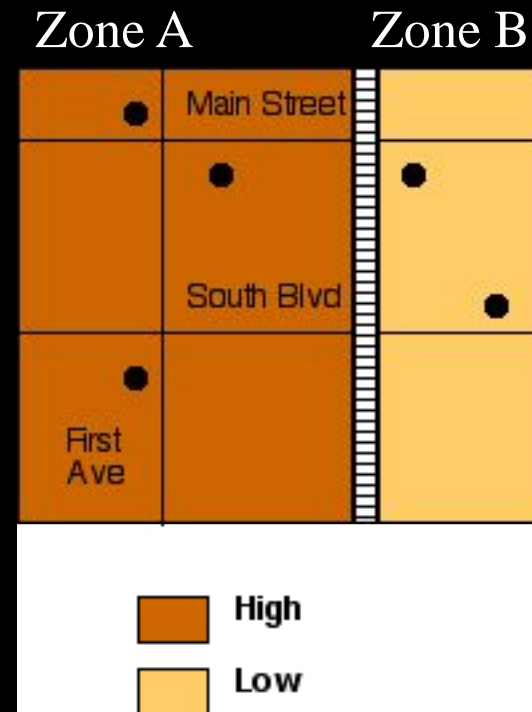
	A
1	Applications
2	35 Main St
3	606 First Ave
4	58 South Blvd
5	49 Main St
6	500 First Ave



Overlay neighborhood
boundary lines
(census tracts,
elementary school
zones, etc)

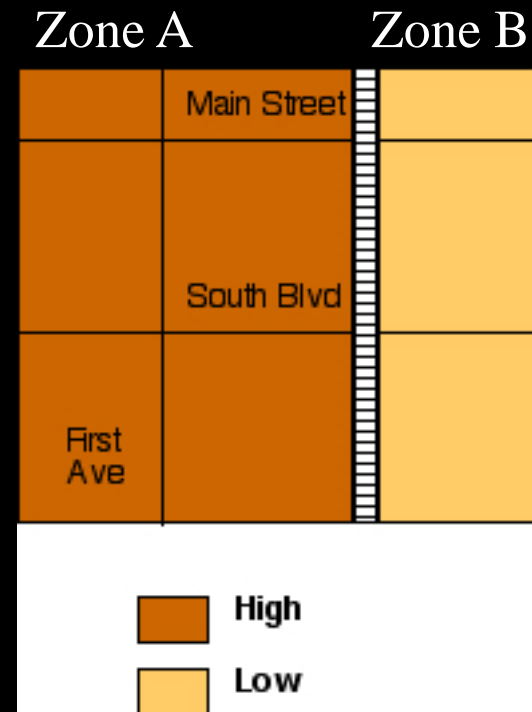
Methods: GIS geocoding at the neighborhood-level

	A
1	Applications
2	35 Main St
3	606 First Ave
4	58 South Blvd
5	49 Main St
6	500 First Ave



Use colors to represent data groups

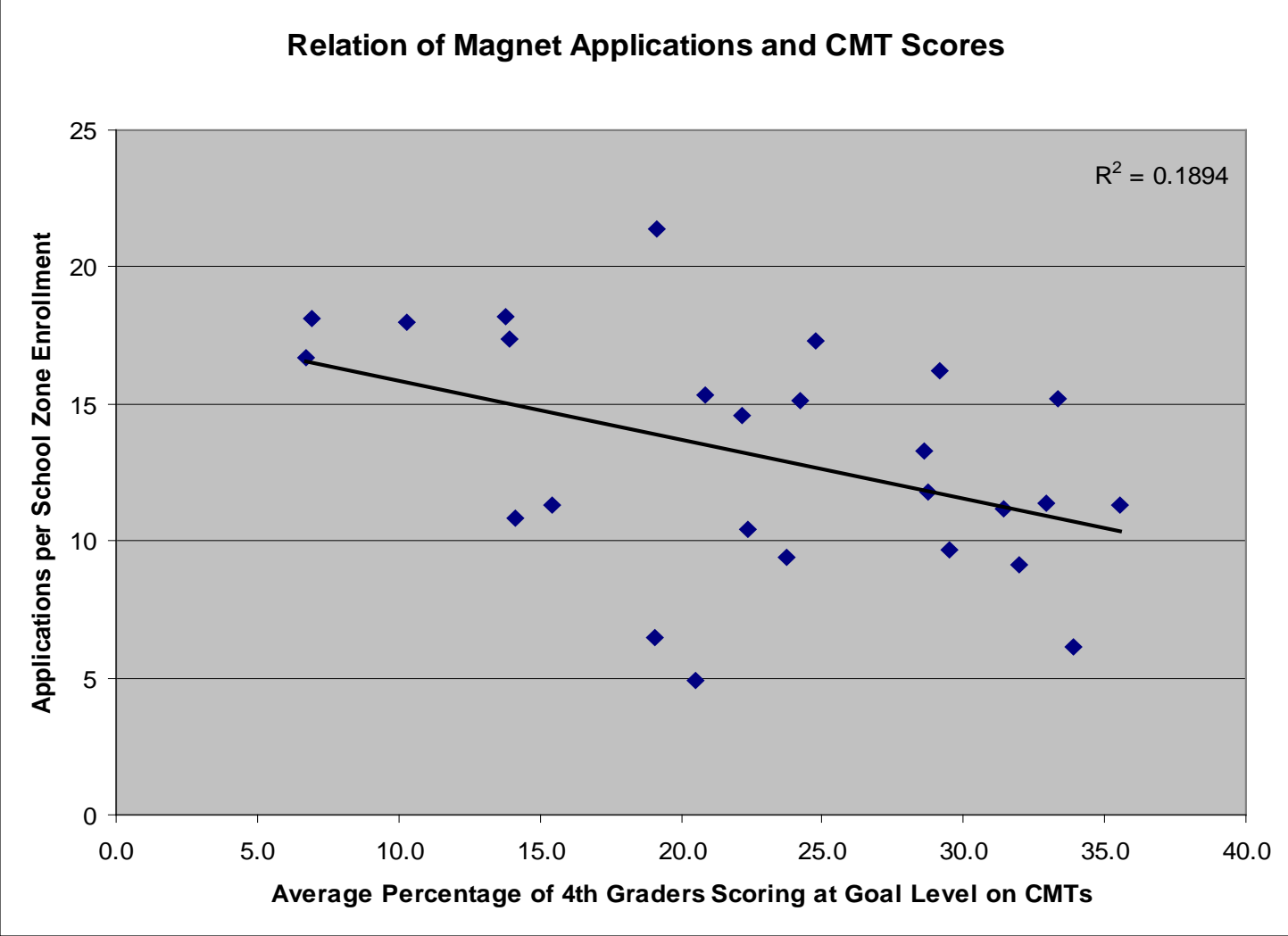
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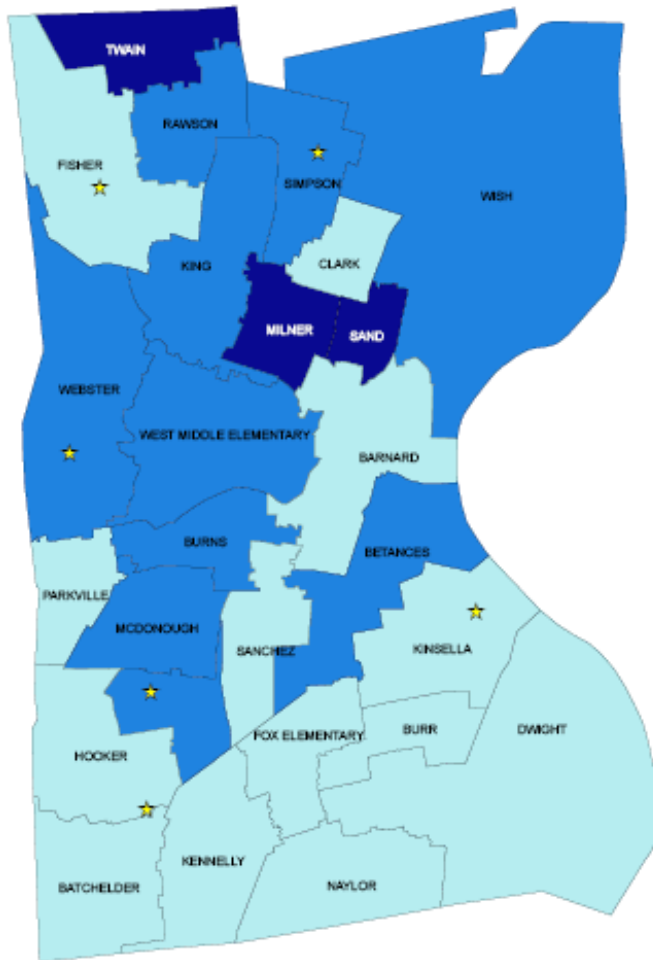
Remove dots and address data to maintain individual family confidentiality

RESULTS

Is there a strong relationship between the rate of magnet applications and school CMT scores in Hartford?



Do applications to HPS elementary magnets vary across different Hartford neighborhoods?



Legend

★ Elementary Magnet Schools

Applications per Enrollment

Below 12%

12% - 18%

Above 18%

Example:

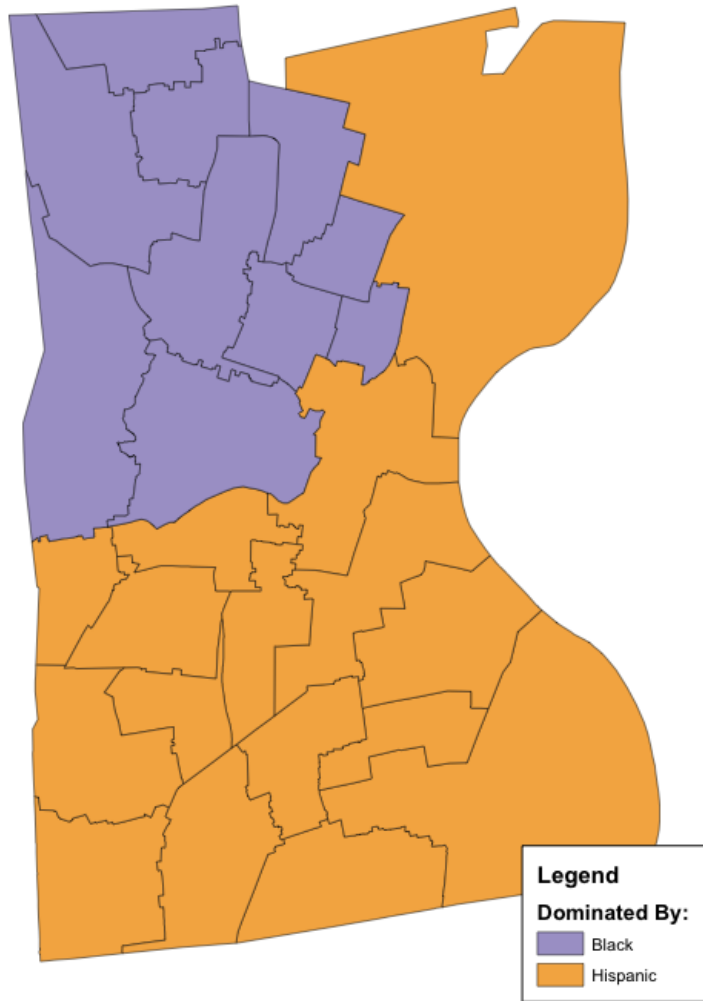
Twain Elem school zone

62 applicants / 290

enrolled = 21% applied to
opt out

Are magnet applications statistically representative of the racial demographics of neighborhoods in which they reside?

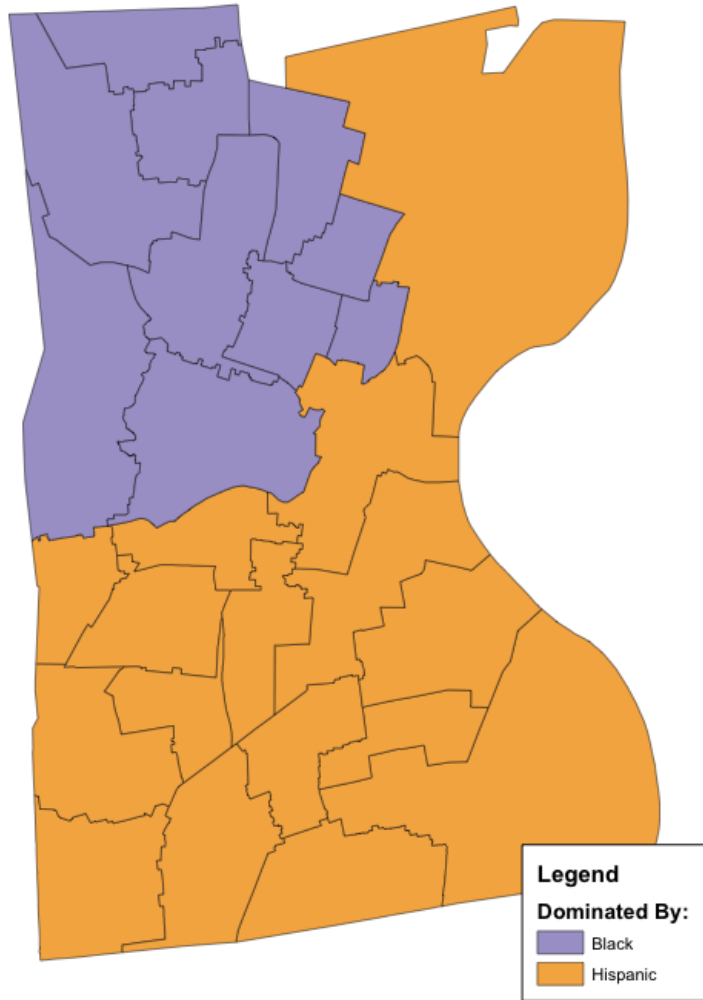
Dominated Elementary School Zones
by Race for 2006-07 School Year



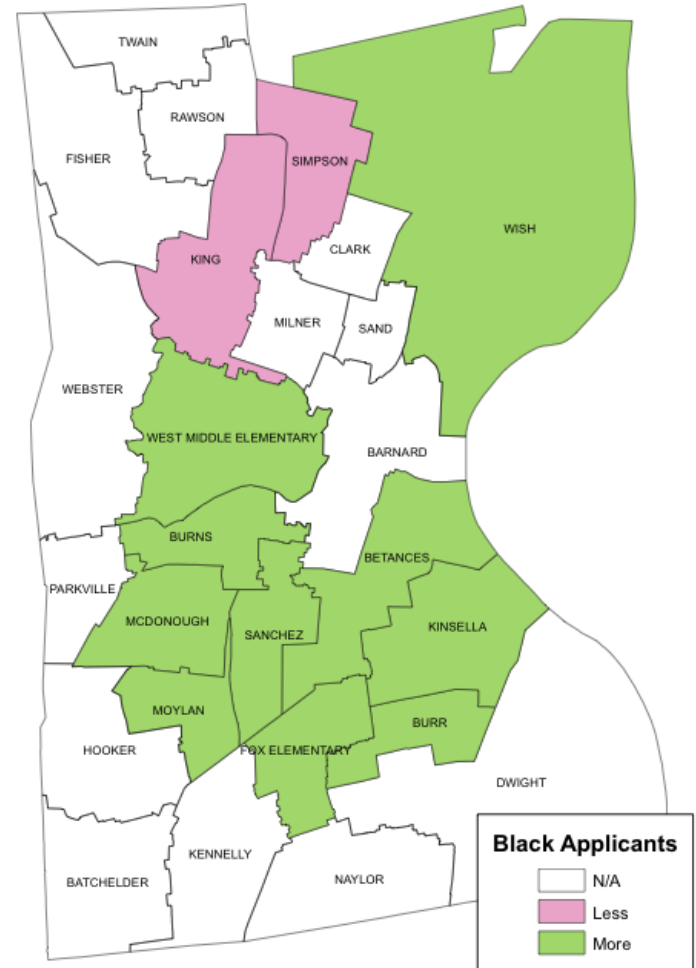
	A	B
1	Applications	Race
2	35 Main St	Black
3	606 First Ave	Hispanic
4	58 South Blvd	Black
5	49 Main St	White
6	500 First Ave	Hispanic

Are magnet applications statistically representative of the racial demographics of neighborhoods in which they reside?

Dominated Elementary School Zones by Race for 2006-07 School Year

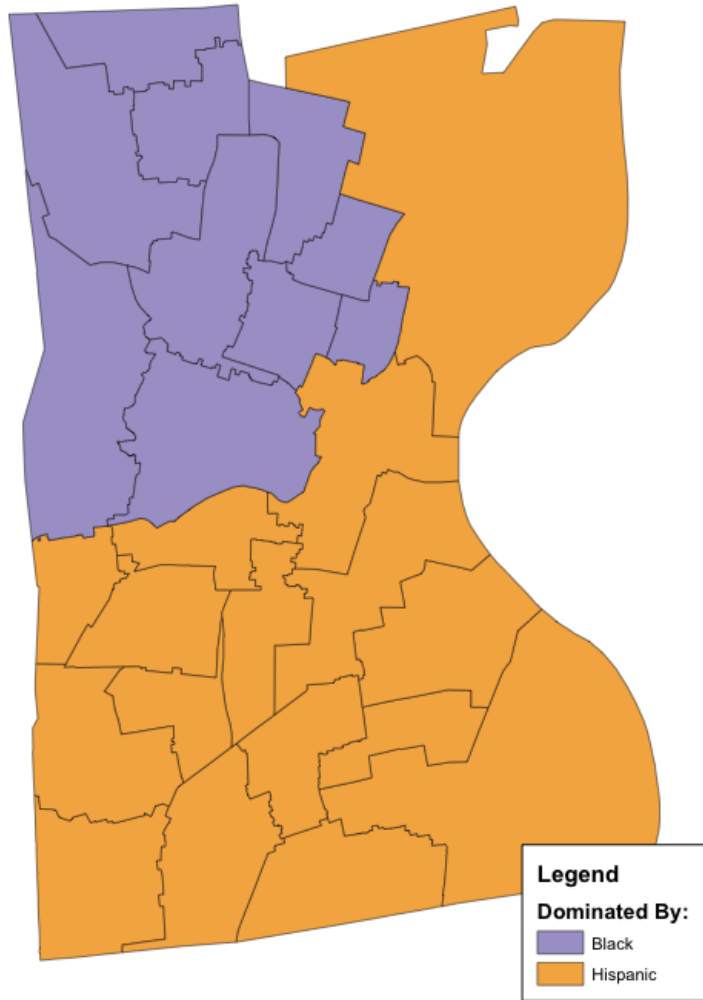


Black Magnet Applicants who were Statistically More likely and Less likely to apply by Hartford Elementary School Zones for 2007-08 School Year

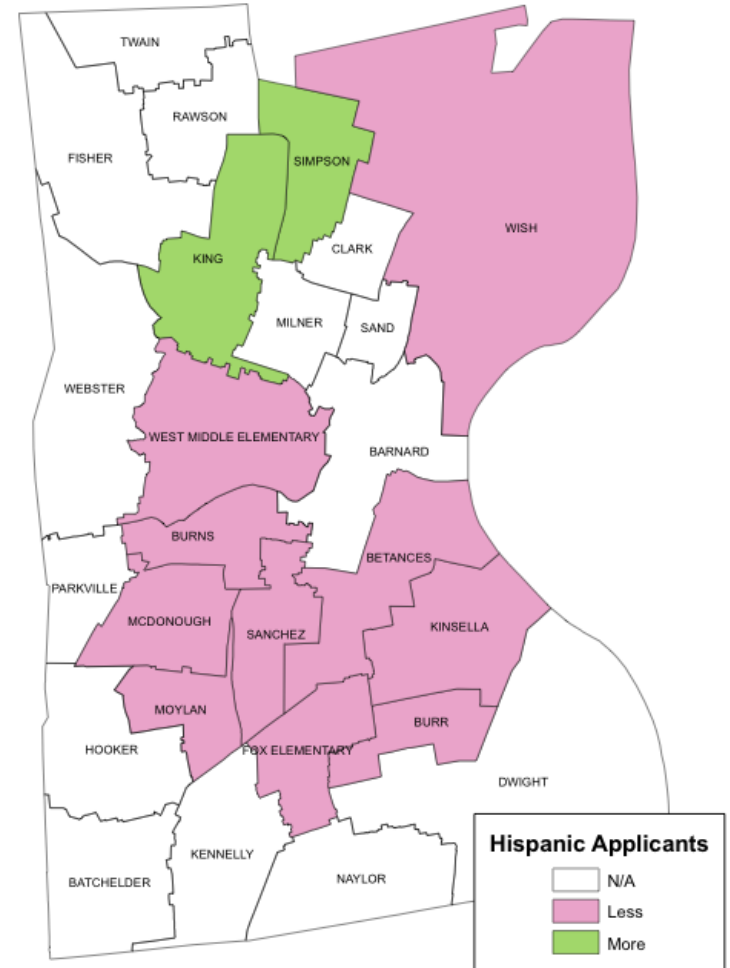


Are magnet applications statistically representative of the racial demographics of neighborhoods in which they reside?

Dominated Elementary School Zones by Race for 2006-07 School Year

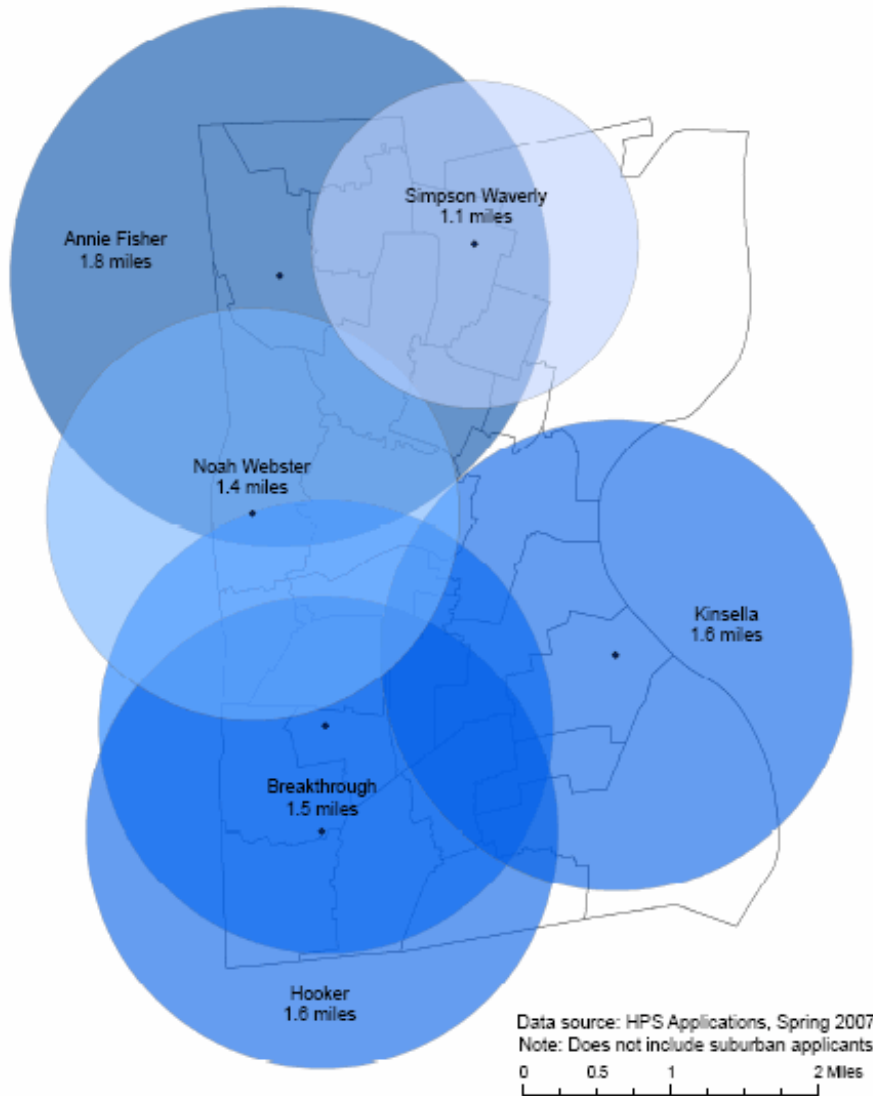


Hispanic Magnet Applicants who were Statistically More likely and Less likely to apply by Hartford Elementary School Zones for 2007-08 School Year



Do magnet schools vary in their degree of magnetism?

Average Distance of Hartford Applicants to HPS Elementary Magnets



Compare:

Although Annie Fisher and Simpson-Waverly magnets located near one another, Annie Fisher “attracted” Hartford applicants from an average distance of 1.8 miles, compared to 1.1 miles

NOTE: Map only demonstrates straight-line distance.

Recap

1. School quality has very little relation with school choice rates
2. Application rates do vary depending upon where an applicant resides in Hartford
3. Families are not applying to HPS elementary magnets equally
4. The six HPS elementary magnets have varying degrees of magnetism

So what?

- *Sheff v. O'Neill* is back in the news again
 - Are magnet schools doing the job they were intended to?
 - Should we take a new approach toward improving desegregation efforts?

References

- Estevez, N. & Dougherty, J. (2006). "Are Magnet Schools Attracting All Families Equally? A GIS Mapping Analysis of Latinos." Conference paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, April 2006.
<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/educ/CSS/research>
- Saporito, S. & Sohoni, D. (2006). Coloring Outside the Lines: Racial Segregation in Public Schools and Their Attendance Boundaries. *Sociology of Education*, 79(2), 81-105.