

Suburban Flight from Hartford Magnet Schools: Parent Views

Research Question

- My research question asks, why do large numbers of suburban families withdraw their children from the University of Hartford Magnet School?
 - After preschool
 - Return to home school districts.
 - Large numbers/ two years
 - Suburban families

Background/Significance

- I chose this project since I have a longstanding relationship with this particular magnet school
 - Mentor- UHART 1 years
 - Mentor/Sub- Trinity 2 years

Background/Significance cont

- Magnet Schools-achieve diversity and desegregation
- Goals for Magnet schools are not being met.
- Magnet schools also touch on racial and integration issues.
 - Issues not being met
- Significance of magnets minimal in CT
 - From the research I collected persist

Research Context

- Magnet school established in 2001
- Pre-k through 5th grade
- Multiple intelligence
 - Diverse learning
 - Class rooms uniquely set up
 - Class sizes smaller than average public school.

Methods

- I conducted in-depth interviews
- 45-60 minutes long
- 2 teachers
- 10 parents
- Informal setting
- Strong relationship/friends

Findings

- Thesis
 - Praise Diversity
 - Value Multiple Intelligences
 - Not sufficient
 - Economics, behavior and diversity

Findings cont

- Issues with economics
 - Always had to pay
 - Burden always on them
 - Activities always held by them
 - Always had to make the effort. Nothing in return

Economics

- “When we try to plan activities on the weekend with our child’s friends from Hartford we have to pay for everything! The burden is always on us!”
- When activities are held at the school or outside of school the responsibility always lies on us. We have to pay for everything and provide everything. Parents from Hartford can not afford to help out.”

Findings cont

- Behavior/Diversity
 - Pick up bad habits
 - Language changes
 - Dress and acting changes
- Diversity
 - Reason for coming but a reason for leaving
 - Children from Hartford-different
 - Setting bad examples for their child and molding them into something that is unacceptable.

Behavior/Diversity

- “I through a birthday party for my child and I invited everyone child from her class. Not one minority child showed up.”
- “I have recently started noticing that my young boy has been coming home and displaying behavior that is not appropriate. Physical force and inappropriate language is not appropriate. I wonder where he learned this behavior-

Behavior/Diveristy

- since he did not learn it from home. I believe he learned it from his peer students from Hartford.”
- “ One of my best friends threw a birthday party and they happen to live in Hartford. My friend invited everyone from the class. The parents from Hartford came since they saw the party was being held at a Hartford address. Once the Hartford parents realized it was a white neighborhood they left and never came it.”

Behavior/Diversity

- “Hartford parents are not sending their child to the school for the same reasons we are. They are sending their child to this school since they are fleeing their public school system. The Hartford parents could care less about diversity. They make no effort to establish relationships with us.”

Conclusions

- Issues like this persist
 - Magnet schools will be useless
 - Race and segregation still seem to be evident
 - Magnet schools will not be able to achieve diversity/desegregation if issues like what I found continue.
- If magnet schools are proven to be unsuccessful what will be the next option to desegregate inner city public schools? Will children from inner city public schools continue to receive an insufficient education?