

Two-Way (Dual) Language Program Feasibility Study and Supporting Data

In 2012, the Hartford Public Schools conducted a feasibility study to determine whether it could develop a two-way language program to take advantage of the language and racial/ethnic diversity of the region. **The study found that a two-way language school is feasible.**¹

While there would be challenges to establishing such a school, there *could* be even greater potential benefits to our region and educational programs. In short, **children that know multiple languages and navigate various cultures will thrive in our increasingly diverse state and interconnected world.** The study cited several potential benefits of a two-way language school, particularly a program that supports both Spanish-English, at an interdistrict magnet:

- *Cognitive benefits to children*
- *Global awareness at an early age*
- *Bilingual citizens*
- *Positive connections between home and school life*
- *(Engage) Stakeholders in local agencies (Community and business support)*
- *Hartford would be a model for other districts*
- *Promotes cultural and social integration*

Available data supports the viability of a two-way (dual) language, interdistrict magnet school in the Hartford region that builds on the strengths of our diverse children and families.

- In 2010-2011, Connecticut had 72,977 children that spoke a language other than English at home. **At least 13.1% of children in the state's schools were multilingual.**²
- Within this group of children, **there were 47,190 children in the state that spoke Spanish at home – 65% of all children with a non-English home language.**
- Throughout the state at least 1,000 children also spoke each of these languages at home: Portuguese, Polish, Chinese, Creole-Haitian, Albanian, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Urdu.
- In 2000-2001, there were **21,305 children, or 3.7% of all students**, that were determined to be “English Language Learners,” a subgroup of multilingual children. By 2011-2012, there were **30,142 children, or 5.4% of all students**, that were in this “ELL” category.³
- The majority of children that speak a language other than English at home attend schools in the metropolitan areas such as **Hartford, Bridgeport, Stamford, and New Haven.**
- In 2010-2011, **one (1) out of every five (5) children** in Connecticut public schools that speak a language other than English at home attended schools in the **Hartford region.**⁴
- In Hartford, more than **85% of children** with a non-English home language spoke **Spanish.**

¹ <http://www.achievehartford.org/upload/files/DualLanguageDiscussion---20130124123318926.pdf>

² Connecticut State Department of Education. “English Language Learners - Languages Spoken by Connecticut Students-2010-2011-All Languages.” Connecticut Education Data and Research. (CEDaR) The most recent data available is from 2010-11 and is based on October 1st enrollment counts.

³ *Ibid.* “English Language Learners - Number of English Language Learners (ELL)-All Years.”

⁴ *Ibid.* 15,828 of 72,977 of children with a home language that was not English attended public schools in the capital area towns that included: Hartford, W. Hartford, E. Hartford, Newington, Farmington, Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, Manchester, S. Windsor, Windsor, Berlin, Simsbury, Windsor Locks, Avon, Cromwell, E. Windsor, Bloomfield, Canton, E. Granby, CREC. Prepared by Robert Cotto, Jr. for “Creating A Dual Language Magnet School for the Hartford Region” on 4/13/13.