

Testimony to the State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee on Elementary and Secondary Budgets

February 11, 2020

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative DiMassa, Representative Horn, and members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing as a parent of a New Haven Public Schools student to express my concern over the proposed budget increase of just 1.5% for New Haven schools. This increase does not even keep up with inflation, and dooms New Haven to continuing to not have the resources needed to support the needs of our diverse community of learners.

At L.W. Beecher School where my daughter and her cousins are thriving, the administrators and teachers struggle to keep up despite their motivation and dedication to their work. Because they do not have enough specials teachers, teachers at the same grade level do not have a prep period at the same time, so they are unable to collaborate and plan together. Needed repairs take months or years to be made. The teachers have to use modest PTO funds (if available) to attend professional development conferences.

One of the reasons that our public schools are so special is that they differentiate their instruction and resources to support students with a variety of social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive needs. The support services these students need are expensive, and we have a moral responsibility to increase funding for education so we do not fail these students. The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding in 2005 and updated in 2014 shows that our public schools are under-funded (in 2014 dollars) by at least \$1.2 billion.

Because of New Haven's reduced tax base with the presence of Yale University and other nonprofit organizations, the state has an even greater responsibility to fund education in our community. As you consider this year's budget, please remember the importance of creating equal opportunities for children to learn and close the gap between funding for New Haven schools and schools in economically privileged communities across the state.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [rebecca.k.cramer@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.k.cramer@gmail.com).

With best wishes,  
Rebecca Cramer  
Parent, L.W. Beecher School