

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committees

My name is Melissa Asare and I am a resident in Stamford. I am a parent testifying on behalf of my daughters Alana age 10 who attends Stamford Charter School for Excellence and Madison age 16 who attends Academy of Information Technology and Engineering. I am writing to you today to express my disappointment regarding the Governor's budget on education, and my optimism for a better path forward.

They are both falling behind because their schools don't offer enough resources and support to help them to succeed. They also have anxiety about being around other people outside our immediate family. They are like this because they have been in the house for so long and didn't have any contact with other people. It is difficult for them to keep up with their lesson plans when their computer screen freezes, the internet lags, or any other types of interruptions.

The Governor's budget unfortunately does not address the chronic nature of underfunded schools. It seeks to put a band-aid on the issue worsened by COVID. It isn't enough. The education budget matters to me because my children need money to help with these issues. I am not able to afford tutors and I am not able to teach them their schoolwork. If they continue on the course they are on now, they will not be successful in school. The Governor's plan to freeze state funding for two years and only use federal funding for public schools is not enough to help the schools to meet the needs of the students. What if the federal funding runs out before their needs are met? What will happen to the children? How will low-income parent like me get the resources to help our children succeed? We must reject the Governor's proposed budget for education and by passing a budget with a significantly more long-term and systemic support for our schools.

There's currently legislation in the education committee SB948 that helps address these disparities, reducing the state's racial funding gap by 68% and makes sure students are at the center of the conversation about education funding. I am counting on you to make the right decisions and to give all students a fighting chance to excel.

If the state contributes to public schools along with the federal funding, the schools will have enough money to meet the children's academic and emotional needs. The more money the schools get the more they can do for the children who need it most. All children should have what they need to succeed no matter what their circumstances are. Please don't put a freeze on the state's funding for two years. Don't put a freeze on the success of the students who need the most help.

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Tuesday March 9, 2021
Written Testimony in response to the Governor's proposed budget for Elementary and Secondary
education in Connecticut

Thank you for your time, and I urge you to think bolder than the Governor's proposed budget for
education.

Best Regards,

Melissa Asare