

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

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

Hello, my name is Tycharmell Denny, and I am the third generation out of four generations that have attended NHPS. 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.

Let me give a brief intro about myself. I am originally from Ansonia, CT. I attended Pre-k to middle school in Ansonia, It's a small town, but I will say I've seen a lot more effort from the teaching professionals in this specific district, than I've seen in NHPS. When I was 17, I moved to New Haven, and going to these schools I've seen little to no support academically. Academic and moral support should be normalized in these schools to help the youths in the black and brown communities, due to the high rates in crime, drugs, and death. These kids should have the same equal education as any other district, so that they too can reach their highest potential going further in life.

The Governor's budget unfortunately does not address the chronic nature of underfunded schools. It seeks to put a bandaid on the issue worsened by COVID. It isn't enough. The state does not give enough for these kids to have the material and support needed to help through times like this. Even before times like this, the state just gave a little to get little to no results. It's not fair for kids in communities of low income, welfare, and etc to have

to be subjected to a specific school because of financial and demographic reasons. Due to the high amount in taxes we pay as New Haven residents, it is nearly impossible to locally fund our schools systems because we as a town just don't have it. We are paying 4.4% in taxes opposed to Westport which only pays 1.8 in taxes. We must reject the Governor's proposed budget for education and by passing a budget with significantly more long-term and systemic support for our schools.

This is why as a resident of New Haven, CT I am asking for help on behalf of the town I reside in, birthed both of my kids in, and the town that my six year old is attending first grade. Its understanding that sometimes economically there are rises and falls, but when the economy has enough to do more, there's no opportunity for more support. These kids in these low income, middle class towns need not only us, but the people we are supposed to be able to depend on, the state we are citizens in and we love so much.

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. I can't say that with my brief speech today that it will change the minds of the ones in control, but I will say that I stand proud to demand more for the towns that need help the most. I'm hoping that you hear me and not just because you have too.

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

Best regards,

Tycharmell Denny