

First I want to thank the education committee for taking the time to listen to my testimony. Hello my name is Brynn Dougherty. I am a resident of Norwich and more specifically a former student and current staff member of The Integrated Day Charter School.

When I started at IDCS in the third grade I was academically behind. I had left my former school because their solution was to have me retained without trying to help or provide extra support. I struggled in all academic areas but was never diagnosed with any learning disabilities. My mother decided that she would pull me from my former school and send me to The Integrated Day Charter School because she was not happy with the way my former school handled the situation. My mother had heard that The Integrated Day Charter School provided more support and really worked with the students they had. When I moved to the Charter school I was entering the 3rd grade. Throughout the day I would be pulled out of the classroom multiple times to work with a paraprofessional in small groups or one on one. These small groups provided me with the extra support I needed. They would give me the chance to work on finding the answers or to work through things on my own time with help from an adult. Throughout the years my teachers and paraprofessionals never gave up and always encouraged my learning. If I did not understand one way it was taught, they would try and find new ways to explain it until I understood. That is what makes The Integrated Day Charter School different. We are not set up like traditional schools. We are unique, just like children. Not every child learns the same. Thanks to my amazing teachers and the help of the paraprofessionals in my classes I was able to catch up by the time I graduated the 8th grade.

Having such a wonderful experience at the Integrated Day Charter School shaped my future. I had experienced first hand what bad teaching could do and I knew that I wanted to make a difference in a child's life the way the staff at Integrated Day Charter School had done for me. Because of the Integrated Day Charter School and the amazing staff I knew I wanted to work with children in a school setting. After graduating college with a degree in psychology with a concentration of childhood development I found myself drawn back to where I felt at home and where I knew I could help make a difference in a child's life. I became a paraprofessional at the Integrated Day Charter school in the fall of 2012. Everyday I get to work with amazing children and adults. I walk through the halls and I see teachers giving their classes everything they have trying to make sure that every student understands the material they are teaching. I see paraprofessionals and support teachers working in small groups or one on one to make sure that their students get the best education we can provide.

That is why I am here today asking for fair funding for Charter schools. I support bills 948 and 949. Charter Schools get students with a range of academic abilities and that come from all different backgrounds. Charter schools need fair funding so that they can continue to support the students academically. Fair funding would make it possible to continue to pay salaries and hire more staff to work with students in small groups or one on one. It would make it so that students that need extra attention like myself will get the support that can help them thrive.