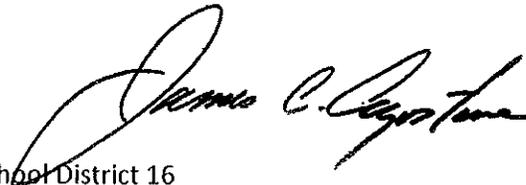


James C. Agostine

Superintendent, Regional School District 16

Prospect/Beacon Falls, CT.

House Bill 6495



Thank you for your time today and for considering House Bill 6495. In October 1999, the Waterbury public schools invited the following towns: Cheshire, Plymouth, Watertown, Thomaston, Regions 14 and 15, Wolcott and Naugatuck to participate in the Waterbury Arts Magnet School (WAMS) consortium. Of the eight invitees, five school districts (Naugatuck, Plymouth, Thomaston, Wolcott and Region 15) are currently partnered in the WAMS consortium. Regional School District 16, comprised of Beacon Falls and Prospect (a town contiguous with Waterbury), was not given the opportunity to participate in the planning for the new magnet school with the possibility of becoming a partner (see attached copies of letters dated 10/28/99 and 11/7/07).

Region 16 has actively participated in the Vocational Technical and Agricultural magnet schools for many years and has had numerous parent inquiries about participation in the WAMS program. Unfortunately, taxpayers in Region 16 have been unable to take advantage of this Fine Arts magnet opportunity due to the fact that there are few, if any, available seats left open for the Parent Choice option provided for by Section 42 of P.A. 07-3, *An Act Concerning Implementing the Provisions of the Budget Concerning Education*. Under this provision a student from a non-participating District may enroll in an Interdistrict Magnet School if a seat is available and the sending District pays tuition.

In the fall of 2008, the Region 16 Board of Education (as a result of increasing parent inquiries regarding fine arts programming options) charged me with: 1. Entering into discussions with ACES, Education Center for the Arts (ECA) for the purpose of joining their consortium as an alternative option. ECA is a part-time program offered in New Haven, and 2. Ascertaining the level of interest in the Region 16 parent/student community in such programming. On January 13, 2009, an open meeting was held with interested parents and students. Twenty four families expressed interest in Fine Arts programming. On February 11, 2009, the Region 16 Board of Education endorsed joining the ACES ECA consortium provided that parents incur the costs of tuition and transportation. The Board, in these difficult financial times, could not incur the costs.

The State of Connecticut has long recognized the need for specialized educational programs, i.e., Vocational Technical and Agricultural Centers, and has provided broad access to these programs. In the current situation, students yearning for programming in the Fine Arts in Region 16 have been effectively blocked from such programming. Taxpayers in a town contiguous with Waterbury, must consider the cost and distance to educate their children in the Arts. The question before you in House Bill 6495 is one of fair and equitable access to education, funded in whole or in part, by the State of Connecticut. I urge you, on behalf of the taxpayers of Region 16 to move this bill forward so that students can have access to educational options.



Waterbury Public Schools

236 GRAND STREET • WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT 06702 • (203) 574-8004 • FAX 574-8010

ROGER A. DAMEROW, Ph.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

October 28, 1999

Dr. Alice L. Carolan, Superintendent
Naugatuck Public Schools
380 Church Street
Naugatuck, CT 06770-2887

Dear Superintendent Carolan:

The Waterbury School District is beginning an exciting new project, the development of a secondary Magnet School focusing on the arts. This project has two components, a 6 - 8 Middle School and a 9 - 12 High School, both part of the same complex to be located in Downtown Waterbury adjacent to the renovated Palace Theater. The Middle School will use an integrated arts curriculum model, while the High School will focus on Performing Arts, Fine Arts and Media Production. Both will be full day programs with on-site academic classes.

This school will be an Interdistrict Magnet School, and I would like to personally invite you to participate in planning for the school, with the possibility of becoming a partner. Partner School Districts will have a designated number of students seats (to be agreed upon) and a seat on the School Advisory Board. We estimate 300 - 500 Middle School students and 500 - 550 High School students will be enrolled. The School is scheduled to open in September, 2003.

Waterbury has secured funds for the planning of the Magnet Program through the Naugatuck Valley Development Corporation. The Educational Specifications and Operational Plan for the school will be developed by Consultants and ACES Staff and submitted to the State Department of Education by December, 1999.

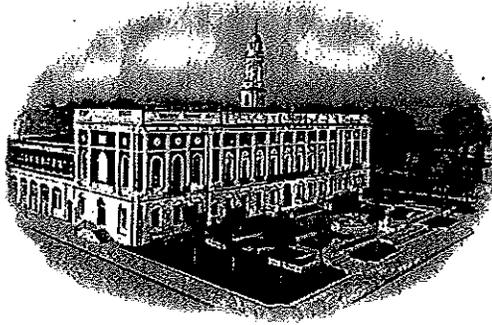
I hope that you will join in initial discussions, and that you will eventually want to offer parents and students in your district this educational option. To this end, I would like to bring interested districts together in November to begin the discussion. Tentatively, our first meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 10 at 5:00 p.m. at 30 Church Street in Waterbury.

Please call me at 203-574-8004.

Sincerely,

Roger A. Damerow, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

CRAIG A. SULLIVAN
CORPORATION COUNSEL



PAULA N. ANTHONY
ACTING ASSISTANT CORPORATION COUNSEL

OFFICE OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL
THE CITY OF WATERBURY
CONNECTICUT

Christine Pastore
7 Summit Road
Prospect, CT 06712

November 7, 2007

Re: FOI Request

Dear Christine:

Enclosed is a copy of the letter sent to area school districts regarding the Magnet School. According to the records of the Board, the letter was sent to Cheshire, Plymouth, Watertown, Thomaston, Regions No. 14 and 15, Wolcott and Naugatuck.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Small', written over a horizontal line.

Janis M. Small

Cc: Attorney Mosley