

**Friis, John**

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**From:** Dan Straka [danstraka@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 14, 2009 2:32 PM  
**To:** Friis, John  
**Subject:** HB6666, Section 5

Hello John,

I am writing over my concern for ECA in New Haven. I attended ECA from 1997 – 2000 and this program was instrumental in my development as an artist and as a successful adult.

On the academic side, I was more than prepared to handle Freshman Foundations at Alfred University's Art & Design program after my classes at ECA. The lessons I learned, on how to hold a camera or edit a video, started my mind on a path of critical thinking and gave me a new lens in which to see the world around me.

On a more personal note, having grown up in a somewhat sheltered neighborhood, my daily trips to ECA and New Haven exposed me to a spectrum of people and ideas that I might not have encountered until much later. Early exposure to this diverse culture gave me a wider view of the world, adding to my humility and understanding of others.

My sister Kate now attends ECA in the music department. Already I can see similar changes in her. Yet her development there isn't over, she still has much to learn from her teachers and those around her.

As for the teachers requiring certification; certification itself is no measure of a great teacher. My fiancé is a teacher and I've learned from her that nothing prepares a teacher except for teaching. Certification does not equal success or quality. To possibly interrupt those that are already successful in their careers, to receive a stamp of approval seems foolish. It is like slapping the brush from Picasso's hand because it's not made from the state approved bristles.

I respect and was inspired by my teachers at ECA, more so than many teachers who were certified and thus highly qualified. If there must be certification, then there should be a system that speedily awards these teachers without severe interruption to ECA's educational process and at no expense to the teacher's themselves. I believe that time already served, in the teaching capacity, should count towards the bulk of earning that merit. If it does not, I think ECA will lose its greatest assets: its outstanding teachers.

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Daniel S. Straka