

**Friis, John**

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**From:** Nicholas Mercier [MercierN@naugy.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2009 9:06 AM  
**To:** Friis, John  
**Subject:** Testimony

To the esteemed members of the Education Committee;

I am writing this letter to express my grave horror at the proposed legislation to allow non-certified arts teachers to teach in State funded magnet schools. Not only is this action in conflict with the current drive for highly qualified and trained educators it seems to fly in the face of current State Department of Education policy and practice. Furthermore, it is alarming that the arts are somehow being singled out from the pantheon of educational thought as not being important enough to require a highly qualified educator.

As a music educator I can assure you that my training and experience reach far beyond just my ability to perform as a musician. In my undergraduate program at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam and in my graduate work at the Hartt School of Music a majority of my courses were focused on education. I had to study child development, learning theory, and differing music education philosophies. Performance majors at the same institute were required to take a completely different set of courses geared towards their career path. And while it would be foolish to assume that a music teacher could step out of the classroom and onto the stage of the Metropolitan Opera without any additional training it is equally foolish to assume that a performer, even one of the highest caliber, has the skills and training necessary to serve a public school educator.

While there is definitely a place in Magnet schools and in education for visiting artists, guest performers, and other specialty instructors, their place is not in the stead of certified music educators. Do not degrade the arts by relegating it lesser meaning with this legislation.

Sincerely,

Nicholas D. Mercier  
Music Educator - Naugatuck School District

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