

Friis, John

From: pegraphics@yahoo.com
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2009 12:27 AM
To: Friis, John
Subject: HB 6666, Section 5

Senator Thomas P. Gaffney, Co-Chairman
Representative Andrew M. Fleischmann, Co-Chairman Education Committee Legislative Office
Building, Rm. 3100, Hartford, CT 06106

sent via email to:
Mr. John Friis, Clerk
john.friis@cga.ct.gov

Regarding: Support for HB 6666, Section 5, Adjunct Instructor Certification

March 16, 2009

Dear Sen. Gaffney, Rep. Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee:

I am writing to you today not only as a parent of a current music student at the ACES Educational Center for the Arts, but also as an Alumnus. I feel this gives me a unique perspective into the intrinsic value of ECA's program in both my personal experience and the perspective of what ECA means for my son, Garrett who is a junior Honors Student at East Haven High School and attends ECA part-time in the afternoon.

As a visual art student at ECA, I experienced firsthand the incalculable benefits of working closely with practicing, professional artists. I was able to interact with others my age as excited and passionate about art as I was. This interaction was the motivation I needed to push myself to the next level as an aspiring artist. My teachers at ECA provided as inspirational and challenging an educational experience thirty-two years ago, as do the practicing musicians my son is inspired by today.

My son, a saxophonist, has the honor of being mentored by Mr. Jeff Fuller, an instructor in Music Composition and Director of ECA's Jazz Ensembles, among others. Mr. Fuller, who has a BA; Cum Laude, from Yale, with a Master of Music (MMUS) from Yale School of Music, currently works as a touring musician and composer. Garrett's exposure to each part-time Music Faculty member at ECA, all equally distinguished in their specialty, has provided my son with unique musical training and challenging college-level course work. Beyond his academic and artistic education, my son has learned that teaching can be an inspiring and collaborative endeavor. The special environment, extraordinary faculty and students from nineteen school districts across the state that Garrett has been privileged to know while at ECA, have undeniably motivated his decision to major in Music Education when he graduates next year.

HB 6666, Section 5, Adjunct Instructor Certification Sullivan Testimony, page 2

Should he continue his education and become a full-time, certified music educator, he would join the ranks of the many extraordinary teachers in our state who have prepared students for high schools programs, including ECA's and beyond. Should he instead choose an educational and career path not unlike his teachers at ECA—to become a practicing musician and part-time mentor to the future musicians of tomorrow—I would hope that option would be available through the carve-out we are advocating for in this legislation.

The ECA model is known for its outstanding success both in Connecticut and across the country. Our alumni consistently report that training received at ECA has prepared them exceedingly well for college, life and work in all areas of the arts. When word of this pending legislation was posted this past Friday to an internet social-networking site by an ECA alumnus, an online support group was formed that has grown exponentially. At the time this letter was written, the group counted 471 members. I believe that kind of response is a testament to the passion my fellow alumni have for their extraordinary

experience while students at ECA. Equally important, the mentors at ECA continue to be positive role-models—not only by making a living as an artist, musician, writer, dancer, actor, producer, photographer, choreographer, etc.—but as functional examples of giving back to their local arts community by finding time (for nominal pay and no benefits) to mentor the next generation of future artists and educators.

As Co-President of PACE (Parents for Arts Centered Education) the parent group at ECA, as an alumnus and most importantly as a parent, I implore you to make every effort to work toward a compromise of language on this bill. Our intent is not to undermine full-time, certified teachers, but to allow the ECA Program to continue unchanged and to build on it's exemplary record of success without the impediment of mandated teacher certification for our unique, part-time program. Without such a compromise, ECA will be forced to close and this locally treasured and nationally regarded program will cease to exist.

Sincerely,

Peggy Sullivan

ECA Class of 1977 and parent of Music Department student

Garrett Sullivan, ECA Class of 2010

23 Clark Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512

203.468.2976