

March 15, 2009

Mr. John Friis
Education Committee Clerk

Dear Mr. Friis,

As a parent of two ACES ECA students, I'm writing to you regarding the Commissioner of Education's proposal that all part-time instructors in Connecticut become certified. I would like to explain why, as a parent, I am opposed to this proposal.

My three daughters all attend the New Haven Public Schools and they have done so since Kindergarten. As a parent, I have often questioned my decision to send my daughters to the New Haven Public School system. Many of my friends have told me that to give my daughters a fair chance in life, I need to send them to Private School. I always maintained that if the student is eager to learn and the parents stay involved, Public Schools would provide my kids with quality education.

My oldest daughter graduated ECA in 2008 and got accepted to an Ivy League university. My second daughter is currently attending ECA and is at the top of her class. The ECA program is one of the most important and influential programs in my daughters' education. The environment at ECA is that of students who want to be there, want to invest themselves in studying and want to do well. Such environment is the most positive influence a parent could hope for when sending his child to school. My daughter told me many times, "I don't know how I would have gone through a school day without ECA." In my view, the proposed certification of ECA teachers will threaten the continued operation of ECA.

ECA's highly specialized teachers are extensively trained professional artist/teachers. They are all recognized in their fields and are responsible for ECA's 35-year record of success. Their ability to convey their artistic experience to students in a formal teaching environment is what defines ECA. I know that these teachers have incurred significant time and expense attaining their advanced degrees at the masters and Ph.D. levels, and are concurrently teaching at area colleges. It would be an absurdity if, for a part-time positions, that offer no benefits they would have to incur the additional time and expense required to become certified. I think that if I was put in their place, I would regretfully make the decision to avoid the hassle and leave the job at ECA. This would jeopardize ECA's mission, since there would not be any available teachers to hire who would be both certified and, simultaneously, practicing professional artists with college-teaching experience. Therefore, the end result of the Commissioner's proposal is that the school would close. I believe that anything that may lead to closing this great institution goes against everything that the education system is desperately trying to accomplish.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely yours,

Yaron Lew
161 Whittier Road
New Haven, CT 06515
(203) 389-1048