

Testimony  
Submitted to the  
Education Committee  
March 9, 2009

SENATE BILL NO. 830 AN ACT CONCERNING THE  
GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING EDUCATION

My name is Rafael Oses, and I am Core Faculty in the Creative Writing department at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. In my twelve years of teaching there, I've seen scores of young people from Hartford and surrounding towns, from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, actively pursue and receive the kind of unique, fulfilling learning experience the Academy and other magnet schools offer. I've seen a generation of students engaged and involved in their own development as artists, citizens and human beings, as they learn, grow and communicate through creativity. Before young people can identify with the greater world, they must identify with themselves. To be able to explore the worlds of knowledge and scholarship with other like-minded, yet utterly diverse students, in an inclusive and integrated learning environment, can give students a greater depth of experience and ignite a lifetime of enlightened, compassionate citizenship.

Students in magnet schools, in addition to learning academic lessons, also have the opportunity to learn equally important (or perhaps more important) social and human lessons they absolutely would not have at their traditional 'town' schools. Students in magnet schools are creating new a new community every day, communities that would not exist otherwise, and each day they spend learning with and learning from each other gives us hope for our state's future communities, ones with less racial and economic isolation and suspicion. Interweaving the cross-sections of Connecticut families can only make the state stronger, allowing the light of education and knowledge to shine equally among its citizens, rather than in separate, distant spotlights. Magnet schools benefit the state as a whole, not just its individual students or the particular cities and towns in which they live, in a radiating ripple effect that spreads throughout the state.

I think the State of Connecticut should fully fund schools like the Academy, because they help make Greater Hartford (and all the communities that magnet schools reach) greater. What is good for all should be paid for by all.