

Good evening. My name is Elaine Stancliffe. I live at 141 Waranoke Road in Manchester. I am the Executive Director of Odyssey Community School.

I am here to thank the governor and the members of the Appropriations Committee for their efforts in preserving the growth seats for charter schools.

Odyssey currently serves students in grades four through eight. We have been waiting with great anticipation for our approved Kindergarten through Grade Three expansion seats to be funded. While we are extremely proud of the academic gains our students have made, we know we will be able to make an even stronger impact when we begin working with students who are at the beginning of their learning experience.

I would also like to express my hope that the governor and the legislature will press ahead with the commitment to create a more equitable funding formula for charter schools. We have survived the last three years of funding at the rate of \$9,300 per pupil, but a fourth or possibly fifth year of funding at that amount means drastic changes in our school.

In our 2011-2012 budget we have had to eliminate two teaching positions.

In a school that employs nineteen full time and part time teachers, the loss of two full time people will have a ripple effect on the teachers who remain.

Our expansion presents us with challenges that are unique to charter schools. Without access to funds for construction and renovation, we are forced to accumulate debt and to seek help from private foundations that are not amenable to providing foundation grants to build public schools. We have paid for our architectural planning services through fundraising efforts such as concerts, auctions and cookbook sales.

While these small efforts have assisted us in planning and design, they will not pay for bricks and mortar. We humbly request that bond funds be restored or that construction money be made available to charters through other means.

Thank you for your interest.