

3/24/11

Dear Senator Harp,

My name is Joshua Zitnay and I am a sophomore in the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program in Woodbury, Connecticut. I live in Oxford, Connecticut and I attend this regional agriscience school choice program because I enjoy agriculture, and the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program offers me an amazing experience to practice agriculture during school, which I would not be able to do in my hometown of Oxford. The school offers great classes in agriculture in addition to core curriculum classes. Aside from my math, science, history, and English, I go to the agriculture building in our school and take my Ag classes. The school offers everything from greenhouse management to Ag mechanics and conservation to Ag production that deals with animals and animal products. These classes teach me skills that I will need later life not only in the Agricultural Industry, but in my daily life of owning my own home and maintaining it. Each student has a Supervised Agricultural Experience, or SAE, where we work at a job in the agricultural industry to practice the skills that we learn in the Agriscience and Technology programs at school. I work at Belinsky Family Farm in my hometown of Oxford, and use the skills I learned in school every day in at work dealing with Christmas trees, vegetables, cows, hay, and equipment. In the FFA I compete on Career Development Events, or CDE Teams. My freshman year I competed on the poultry and poultry product judging CDE Team. We won first for the Connecticut competition, and competed at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis as the team from Connecticut for the event against teams for 47 other states. These are all great experiences that make my high school career much more enjoyable, teach me important skills for life, and will help me to succeed later in life.

I am writing this letter to encourage you to **please urge the Appropriations Committee to pledge 9 million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the Governor's budget to the state's 19 regional (vo-ag) agriscience programs.**

Our agriscience programs have been drastically underfunded for over 20 years as compared to the magnet schools, charter schools, vocational technical schools and the other school choice funding programs. (Please see attached flyer with details)

This will allow hundreds of more students like me to enroll in these successful programs so they will have the same positive experience I am having now.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Joshua W. Zitnay