

56 Deerfield Lane
Bethany, CT 06524

March 17, 2011

Members of the Appropriations Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

Our son Timothy came to Common Ground in September 2010, as a sophomore. His performance in our local public high school had been disappointing throughout his freshman year, and we'd watched, with sadness, as his natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning had given way to laziness and apathy. Amity is a large school (almost 500 students per graduating class), and it was easy to fly beneath the radar, if you so chose. His grades were lackluster, his attitude was negligent, and we didn't see anything on the horizon that looked to change this.

Over the summer, we struggled to find an alternative, but it wasn't until August that we came across Common Ground. Tim interviewed, and we all came away impressed with what the school was offering its students. It found innovative ways to combine courses that allowed teaching more students more material without more teachers. Its small size meant that it was much, much harder to 'slip between the cracks' – within weeks (if not days), everyone in the school knew who Tim was. The beautiful thing for us, however, was that Tim didn't feel oppressed by this environment – he felt inspired. The teachers and other staff cared about him, and about how he did – and he responded with more enthusiastic work. We saw not just an increase in grades, but an increase in excitement about school.

We'd love to see Common Ground get better funding – although the classes offered are pretty diverse for its size, it would be great to see, for example, Physics for upperclassmen. We'd love to see the teaching staff – obviously invested in their work and caring about their students – be paid a higher wage. The recent technology upgrades have been wonderful – but the school could use more. The library is a bit sparse, and could stand to be filled out. In short, Common Ground does wonderful work with the resources it has – and we have no doubt that it could put additional resources to fantastic use.

Sincerely,



Claude Errera