

Appropriations Committee Co-Chair  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Senator Toni Harp,

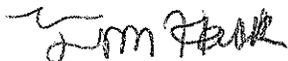
My name is Tim Houk and I am a freshman in the Wamogo Regional High School agri-science program in Litchfield CT. Although I live in Litchfield, I attend this regional agri-science school program because of the AG Program. The Wamogo Regional High agri-science program offers so much to its students. It provides many hands on experiences, the chance to explore careers and work with others, and the school offers a good education. The program offers the experience and tools to succeed both in college and the work place. I would attend Litchfield High School if this experience was not available to me. I feel that this program pushes me harder and makes me think in ways my old school never did. I will use the skills I learn in the program to excel after High School.

As a part of the agri-science program, all students must participate in FFA activities and an S.A.E. or Supervised Agricultural Experience each year after their Freshman year. The S.A.E. is designed to prepare students for the up coming tasks ahead. The S.A.E. requires over 600 hours of work on a job or volunteer project, and it teaches skills, time management and responsibility. I am looking forward to working as a mechanic in my father's business as my S.A.E., and learning more about small engine repair. I also raise and show beef cattle, ride horses, and tend to our small farm. I am learning more about each of these areas as an Agri-science student. This is a benefit of participating in the Agricultural Science program that is not offered in a regular public school. My involvement in the FFA and in a S.A.E. project will get me better prepared for 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) agri-science programs. Our agri-science 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,



Tim Houk