

Testimony of Alicia Gibbs
Parent, Achievement First and Highville Charter School
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- My name is Alicia Gibbs, and I have children in the New Haven Public Schools, at Achievement First, and previously at Highville Charter School.
- As a parent, there is nothing more important than ensuring your child has a quality education that provides for their individual needs.
- My charter school has provided that kind of focus for my son/daughter.
- But, I am not just a parent, I am a taxpayer, and I have been concerned that under the current funding mechanisms, the public school my child attends is funded at a lesser rate than the traditional public schools in New Haven. I see my tax dollars used every year for *other public schools*, but not for the one I've chosen for my son. The one that is giving him the best—and maybe only—chance to succeed in college and in his professional life.
- I'm here tonight in strong support of the Governor's budget, and in particular of the requirement that cities and towns contribute 1K per pupil served to charter schools in their district. Now I know there are many people and organizations here tonight who disagree with me, who would say that towns like mine have no obligation to support my child's education. I disagree, for two reasons:
 - First, a financial one—the Governor's budget provides increases in the ECS formula that more than cover district's funding of charters.
 - Second—and more importantly: my *son*, like all children across Connecticut, represent the future of this state. They will need jobs and the ability to live a successful life. I believe that this committee—and all elected officials across the state—must work to ensure that our kids get access to the opportunities that help ensure this. I applaud any public servant who looks out for my child's future, and it seems to me that making funding for charter schools more equitable is a crucial part of this process.
- Let me close by saying that charters are creating an educated workforce that will move our state forward, but it's clearly the case that they must *grow* to do this for even more students. We need to provide our public charter schools with the funding they need to expand and provide more students with a quality education, not continue to cripple them. This has gone on for too long.
- I have neighbors and family members who are desperate to attend a great public charter school, and I know that fixing the inequitable funding situation is their only chance to do so.
- I look at my school, and I *know* that its high school writing scores are higher than those of students in Darien, Westport, and Madison. That's a school that needs our full support.
- The Governor's proposed increase goes a long way towards ensuring that public charter schools become an equal part of the public school system in this state. I thank the Governor, and I urge this committee to support equitable funding for public charter schools.