Testimony of Byrute Johnson
Parent at Common Ground High School,
358 Springside Avenue, New Haven, CT 06515
Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee
February 21, 2012

Honorable Chairs, Members of the Appropriation Committee:

As a parent of a Common Ground High School student, I would like to urge you to support Governor Malloy's Education Reform plan and his proposed budget, which includes increased funding for charter schools.

My daughter is now a junior at Common Ground. She spent her freshmen and sophomore year at Common Ground. As a freshman, she was enriched by all the activities she was offered. She had an opportunity to shadow a college student at the University of New Haven where she got a feel for what college life is like. Last summer, she also had the opportunity to take an enrichment program at Southern Connecticut. My daughter's study habits have improved and I am just amazed how focused she is and how positive she is about her work, her school and herself.

My daughter is in a school that gives her a tremendous educational environment where she has many choices and is thriving as a student. She has told me on numerous occasions how she absolutely loves Common Ground. Common Ground just clicks for my daughter.

As a whole, Common Ground has done more with fewer resources, but we owe it to our children to have the same funding as everyone else. As parents, we're asking that Common Ground receive the same funding for each student that is given to students in the public school system. This is only fair.

Common Ground High School is a special place. The school and the faculty are family and their actions reinforce that description. The school simply is special and the students demonstrate a love of Common Ground that does *not* exist in every school. The majority of students' one opportunity in life and beyond is through school. Common Ground gives them and prepares them for that opportunity.

Thank you for taking the time to hear from your constituents. We need you to fix the untenable situation for charter schools, which have made such a positive difference in my child's life and a positive contribution to my community.

B. Johnson
Common Ground High School Parent