

Telephone: (203) 783-1114  
[www.Little-Scientists.com](http://www.Little-Scientists.com)

A "hands-on" approach to learning.

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Dr. Heidi Gold-Dworkin. I am the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Little Scientists, a Connecticut based, and minority owned small business. I was trained as a scientist at Cornell and Yale Universities. I have lived most of my life in the cities of New Haven and Milford, Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you tonight.

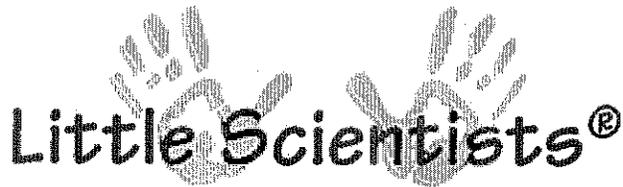
Connecticut's future as a leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century depends on educating young children in science. Little Scientists, and its team of Yale, Cornell, and MIT educators and scientists, have devoted over 125 years to science education of young children (Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade), as well as in the training of elementary and middle school teachers in science. The benefits of educating young children in science are two-fold. First of all, the excitement of science encourages children to develop strong educational foundations in all academic areas – this will help to close the achievement gap in Connecticut. Secondly, young children are innately curious – they are natural scientists encouraging their natural curiosity helps interest them in a future in science.

There are major benefits to educating scientists in Connecticut. 1. Connecticut can become a world leader in science, technology, engineering, and innovation. 2. Connecticut will benefit economically. 3. Connecticut will not be the state with the largest achievement gap in our nation. To accomplish this goal, Connecticut needs Little Scientists, a sustainable and effective hands-on, minds-on, inquiry-based, science curriculum which EXCEEDS both State & National Science Education Standards.

Little Scientists has worked with many school districts in Connecticut, throughout the United States, as well as internationally in Japan. In fact, most of the interest in Little Scientists has come from Asian Countries. This is troubling to me as a US citizen, because the US has fallen far behind other countries in terms of science education and scientific innovation. All the leading international indicators including TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), and the number of patents, Ph.D., and M.D. degrees say that the US has been surpassed by most other advanced nations. The latest PISA report shows the US students as #23 on international science assessments, far behind students of China, Japan, Finland, Canada, Australia, and Singapore.

Little Scientists wants your support to help Connecticut students compete globally in science. Little Scientists has developed an innovative science curriculum. By participating in hands-on, minds-on, inquiry-based investigations, students develop essential learning skills applicable throughout their education. These skills include critical thinking, problem solving, observation, classifying, comparing, researching, and communication skills. Little Scientists has years of assessment data which prove the effectiveness of the Little Scientists Educational Program. This data includes: CMT (Connecticut Mastery Test) 5<sup>th</sup> grade data in Connecticut; Creative Curriculum Assessment Data in New Haven, Connecticut; SOL (Standards of Learning) Assessment Data in Richmond, Virginia; and ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) Assessment Data in Georgia. The assessment data demonstrate increases in scientific skills as well as increases in literacy and math skills, supporting the work of Michael Klentschy who uses science to boost literacy and math skills in ELL (English Language Learning) students.





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Little Scientists is asking for its program to be included in the classrooms of Connecticut's Priority School Districts. A strong science curriculum in the early grades will boost the academic skills of these students. Educating more students in science gives them better job opportunities in the future. Educating more scientists provides a talented workforce pool for innovative technology and scientific based corporations. Expanding the Little Scientists Educational Program will create jobs in Connecticut. Every increase of 1 school using the Little Scientists Curriculum creates 2 new jobs for Connecticut residents, 1 job is as a supply builder (someone to help manufacture curriculum units and refills), and 1 job is as a trainer to work with teachers in the school to help them implement the curriculum effectively in their classrooms.

In summary, funding of Little Scientists in the priority school districts will help close Connecticut's achievement gap, boost Connecticut's economy, and enable Connecticut's youth to compete for future jobs in the high tech future of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Thank you,

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