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Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischman, Senator Boucher and Representative Giuliano, and esteemed members of the Education Committee,

Thank you very much for the opportunity today to testify on Section 13 of SB 24, An Act Concerning Educational Competitiveness. Section 13 increases state per-pupil operating grants to most non-Sheff inter-district magnet schools, with essentially one large exception – in-district grants for a student attending a RESC Magnet School that enrolls at least 55% of its students from a single town. In fact, if we do nothing, that state grant will actually decline, which seems to contradict the very purpose of Section 13, and Governor Malloy's principal of expanding availability of high-quality school models. I urge you to consider increasing the in-district grant to equal the amount paid for an out-of-district student.

The Thomas Edison Middle School (TEMS) in Meriden is an inter-district magnet School that serves up to 800 students from Meriden, Middletown, Middlefield (Region 13) and Wallingford in grades 6-8 to focus their studies on science, mathematics and technology. Approximately 75% of the enrollment at TEMS is from Meriden. The other 25% is a compilation of students from neighboring towns. When a magnet school run by a RESC serves more than 55% of its students from the host district the state discriminates against the host district by providing significantly less funding for students from that district in comparison to its education subsidy for students from other districts. This disparity applies in particular to TEMS and Wintergreen School (Senator Looney's District) in Hamden.

The Town of Meriden currently receives \$3,833 per pupil compared to \$6,730 received by the other districts. On top of the large difference, if there is no action taken, then that number is scheduled to drop to \$3,000 for FYE 2014 and later. Concomitantly, for towns that enroll less than 55% district students in a RESC managed magnet school, the state subsidy is scheduled to increase to \$7,060 for FYE 2014 and later. In other words, the state subsidy for students attending the same school, with the same classrooms, the same teachers and the same curriculum discriminates radically against host districts, providing only \$3,000 per student from the host district compared to \$7,060 to students from other districts. Ironically, the school districts that suffer the most from this discrimination are those that can least afford it.

Understanding the role and purpose of magnet schools, The Town of Meriden, and the operator of TEMS (ACES), have taken steps to encourage enrollment from neighboring towns in order to lower the percentage of in-district students. But as one of the towns certainly to be on the envisioned list of conditional districts, shortchanging the town of Meriden approximately \$2 million per year in education funding seems counter to the goals we are trying to achieve with this legislation. We urge the Education Committee to address this funding discrimination and provide equal funding for equal education in our inter-district magnet school.

Thank you very much for your attention, I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this in the Education Committee when we evaluate SB 24.