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**From:** HARRIS, TANYA <TANYA.BELL@new-haven.k12.ct.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 2:32 PM  
**To:** AppropriationTestimony  
**Cc:** COSTANZO, FRANK; PUGH, KJERSTIN  
**Subject:** Letter to the Connecticut Appropriations Committee

Dear Appropriations Committee,

I am a parent of two children that attend Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School, a Public Health Nurse and an after school teacher for the school's CAS program <http://co-opafterschool.org>.

Sisterhood, is a program for young ladies to come together and collaborate their thoughts and ideas of school life, as well as what is going on in society. We discuss health related issues and how it impacts our lives. We embrace one another by bonding through communication, role play, and journal writing. We have an exercise component, for as we improve and strengthen our minds, we strive to improve and strengthen our physical selves, as well.

I have observed the young ladies become empowered through advocacy for themselves and each other. They have formed nurturing bonds with young ladies of all grades and reflect on their yesterday and display the bright opportunities availed for their tomorrow. They have become one with each other. They have been challenged to take ownership of their health and physical wellness by the foods they eat and the amount of exercise incorporated. They have pushed themselves to limits that they never envisioned.

Through the bonds of Sisterhood, they encourage, empower, nurture and learn from one another, within the school and in the community. We have raised awareness of Breast Cancer and through fundraising, raised funds to support a Breast Cancer Survivor Group, Sister's Journey. They learn to think beyond themselves as true Humanitarians.

The after school programming has been very instrumental in the lives of these young ladies and has proven to be very valuable, as these young ladies are our future leaders. I trust that what is in the best interest of our children, supercede other matters at hand. I truly hope that this committee will find a way to continue the grant necessary, so that our children can continue to have the best that our schools have to offer.

Sincerely Yours,

Tanya Harris R.N., P.H.N.