

Doreen Richardson
Chair, Windsor Board of Education

2/21/2013: Testimony to Appropriations Committee

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I fully support the priority given to public education in the Governor's budget proposal. I urge you to maintain the proposed increase funding for education including the allocations to Alliance Districts.

In times of economic stress the standard formula is to tighten our belt, reduce expenditures, and balance the budget. Unfortunately, in this calculation education is perceived as somewhat discretionary. The reality as you know is that continued investment in public education is critical to the economic development and general health of our communities.

I also urge you to articulate the necessary safe guards to ensure that State aid to Municipalities for education is used only for education. I recognize that the Governor's increased allocation to education is viewed as a lost to other buckets of resources on which towns and cities have come to rely. However, we must ensure that State aid allocated to education is not used to supplant local educational investments.

I would also like to voice my support for the funding allocated to talent development. We must continue to invest in and support our teachers, the most important stewards of our most precious resource, the intellectual capital of our children. Windsor Public Schools is a pilot district in Connecticut's newly adopted System of Educator Evaluation and Development. We are also implementing the newly adopted Common Core curricula. While we remain committed to this transformative effort to ensure an effective teacher in every classroom, delivering a guaranteed viable curriculum, inspiring within our children a love of learning, critical thinking and creative problem-solving, we also have no illusions regarding the resources in terms of time, personnel and dollars that this commitment requires.

In Windsor we have a strong tradition of local support for our public schools – in good and not so good economic times. Though the State has rarely fully funded ECS, we recognize the State's commitment to the integrity of public education as evidenced in the Secondary School Reform Act of 2010, and the 2012 Act Concerning Educational Reform. I respectfully ask that this commitment to public education, to educational equity and excellence for each of our children, be further and more effectively demonstrated through the appropriate allocation of financial resources.

Thank you.