

Khadijah Muhammad
New Haven Public School Parent
Testimony Submitted to Appropriations Hearing
February 21, 2013

Good evening and thank you for joining us today. My name is Khadijah Muhammad and my children attend Achievement First schools in New Haven.

I am here today with other public charter parents to remind you, that as a parent, there is nothing more important than ensuring our children have a quality education that provides for their individual needs.

I am very proud of my children, who have been successful because of your previous support and allocations.

*Amirah graduated from Amistad Academy in 2005 and now is a Certified Nurse Assistant, Department of Children and Family Respite Worker, Health Care Provider CPR and will be attending a four college to become a Register Nurse. Next month, she will receive an award for **Outstanding Positive Women in the Community** in Bridgeport, CT.*

*Shehu, my only son, is in the 12th grade and graduates this year. He is on the Dean's List, GPA 3.6, takes 3 AP College Courses, plays lacrosse and donates some of what is left of his time to help at health fairs and food banks. He has been accepted at CCSU and UCONN. In addition, awaits Lafayette, University of Syracuse, WPI and University of Rochester acceptance letters for **science and engineering**.*

*Aminah, my middle child, is in the 11th grade, has a GPA 3.1, takes AP History II, played soccer, editor and chief of yearbook committee. This summer she will be participating in an ecology program in Vermont and attending Eastern Connecticut State University to focus on ways to influence **female leadership in Government and Equality**.*

*Azizah, my youngest, is in the 6th grade, received 3 of the REACH Awards, reads at the 7th grade level, plays the cello and loves to play soccer and lacrosse. She reminds me constantly that she is the **college graduating class of 2023**.*

2023 seemed so far away years ago, but to know that in 6 years, my baby will be in college. I thank you so much and you should be very proud of them because they are all of our future. Although I only had 4 children, we know that there are many stories like mine in this room today and the children and the parents are doing a great job. This could not have been possible without your support, it was crucial then and is even more crucial today. Our Governor stated last March, that of the children in Connecticut, only 13% can read, 13% can write and only 33% can do math. This is why Conn. ranks #50 in the achievement gap in the U.S. This is not okay. We parents want the choice so that our children get a chance for success.

But, I am not just a parent, I am a taxpayer, and I have been concerned that under the current funding mechanisms, the public school my child attends is funded at a lesser rate than the district schools in New Haven. The state average in funding appropriated to schools remains more than 10% higher for traditional public school. The Governor's proposed budget attempts for the second year in a row to ensure that public charter schools will eventually become an equal part of the public school system in this state. I thank the Governor, and I too urge the General Assembly to support his proposed budget for public charter schools.