
From: KATZ, JUDITH <JUDY.KATZ@new-haven.k12.ct.us>
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2013 8:08 PM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Cc: HOLSENBECK, SUZANNAH; PUGH, KJERSTIN; ENGLART, MINDI; COSTANZO, FRANK
Subject: Please Keep After School Programs

Dear Appropriation Committee Members,

Unlike the students in private schools, public school children are in classes fewer hours daily, have to spend an ever increasing amount of their class time preparing for high stakes testing, and have fewer options for enrichment. That any of them yearn to stay in school extra hours to be able to enjoy more creative, dare I say, freer ways of learning is a minor miracle. The students whose after-school programs you are planning to cut are the people who will be caring for you and the direction of this state and country when you are no longer able to do so. Please bear in mind what the message you send will be if you cut after-school programming. It's not a frill, it is an opportunity for students to spend their time, voluntarily learning more.

I have taught after school programs at the Cooperative Arts and Humanities Magnet High School in New Haven for five years. Each of my classes has included reading, writing, and higher order thinking that there is no time for in the regular school day. The students who stay for these programs want to learn, want it so much that they happily show up, sometimes walk home, pay for late buses when there are no tokens, and encourage their friends to do the same.

As a parent, taxpayer, writer, and teacher I have a very clear, up-close and personal understanding of how difficult the times we live in are. People who had been solidly middle class, like myself, find ourselves teetering on the edge of falling from middle class to lower class every pay period. How shall I spend the ever decreasing value of the dollars I have? However few dollars I have I have always prioritized education. I sincerely believe that education has been my saving grace and is that for both my biological children and the children I teach. Teaching is my third career...I could have stayed in the more lucrative business world, but I voted for education with my own paycheck and career.

I know that each person on this committee understands how important education is, and without knowing you personally, I know that in your own lives you have sacrificed much in order to obtain the best education you could get for yourselves and your loved ones. My decision to teach in the public school system is my service to this country and its future just as your decision to run and serve is yours. I am on the front lines of the battle for quality education daily and I am here to tell you, to beg you, to find your cuts elsewhere. Our future is in your hands and your votes.

Thank you.

Judith J. Katz
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