Testimony of William Mendoza
Parent at Common Ground High School
358 Springside Avenue, New Haven, CT 06515
Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee
February 21, 2013

Honorable Co-chairs; Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Willie Mendoza, and I am a parent at Common Ground High School, where my daughter Linnette is in her junior year.

I believe what makes Common Ground excel in so many ways is captured simply in a quote by Robert M. Hutchins: "It must be remembered that the purpose of education is not to fill the minds of students with facts...it is to teach them to think." Schools also need to pay attention to the whole child. At Common Ground, the staff helps to develop and enhance students' social and emotional skills, and help them to solve problems creatively. I have seen Linnette flourish at Common Ground because she is both challenged and supported as a student at the same time.

While we are grateful for last year's support of Governor Malloy and the General Assembly, Connecticut's public charter schools are still very underfunded in comparison to district public schools.

We cannot afford to have our funding cut further; the cuts we already face this legislative session should not be seen as a slight cut following last year's notable increase. In fact, these budgetary changes are already substantial. Even this year's cut to our budget will put our schools at risk. Common Ground's program, which appears to both raise grades and promote a positive school climate, may be endangered with the cuts we may be facing.

Protecting the increase in the funding we were promised last year is vital to Common Ground school operations.

To close, I am here today to remind you that all growth Common Ground High School hopes to see over the few years is endangered by possible cuts and lowered funding.

Thank you for your support.