

**Testimony of Cynthia Sherard
Common Ground High School Parent
154 Russell Street, New Haven, CT 06513
Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Committee
February 20, 2013**

Honorable Chairpersons, Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am the parent of a student at Common Ground High School in New Haven, Connecticut. I specifically chose Common Ground for my son Cameron because I felt he would prosper in this school and have his educational needs met. I wanted him in an environment where he would excel, and feel confident to do his very best. Common Ground is doing all that I hoped for and more.

What I do not understand is why Connecticut's public charter schools should receive less than district public schools. Regardless of which type of school my son Cameron attends, whether it be a public charter or public district school there should be no difference in the quality of his education that is dependent on sufficient funding by the state. Cameron is still part of the Connecticut educational system and should not be penalized.

I am here today to remind you that all growth Common Ground High School hopes to see over the next few years is endangered by possible cuts and lowered funding. While we are grateful for last year's support of Governor Malloy and the General Assembly, Connecticut's public charter schools remain significantly underfunded in comparison to district public schools. As a school, 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 to last year's notable increase. In fact, these budgetary changes are already substantial. Even this year's \$300 cut to our budget will put our schools at risk. Protecting the increase in funding we were promised last year is vital to the success of our students at Common Ground High School. The impact of the lost funding could affect the benefits Cameron receives by attending Common Ground.

Thank you for your time and consideration.