

To the members of the Connecticut Legislative Education Committee,

I am a teacher! I am striving each day to be an excellent teacher. The belief and faith in the work I am doing keeps me inspired and new. I am aware of the impact I have on my students and society, and I take my role very seriously.

I bring with me an energy and enthusiasm for learning. By studying regular and special education as well as the Montessori method, I have learned that there are as many routes to achieving a goal, as there are methods of education. It is my responsibility to be knowledgeable and open to the various approaches and to find the right combination for each child.

I want the children I teach to not only succeed in my classroom; I want them to succeed in life. As a grade one teacher, I have been responsible for helping to develop literacy and numeracy in children. I have helped students expand their knowledge in many subject areas and have helped instill a love of learning. My hope is for these children to become happy, highly motivated, intelligent, and creative people. I want them to develop a strong love for humanity and to see beauty in their world. It is my aspiration that each student gain self-discipline and self-respect. I recognize these are high goals, but they are the true goals needed for each student to become a productive member of society.

What has happened in education and is continuing to happen to my profession makes my holistic goals for the children difficult to stay focused on. There are days when I don't recognize myself anymore. Imagine listening to a 6 year old child describe the death of a beloved pet and your mind starts moving from that present moment into worrying about the amount of time that this 2 minute conversation is taking away from academics. My heart and soul break. I realize in that moment that I have changed. I recognize only a task driven educator, rather than a holistic teacher modeling what to do for another human being when they experience a sense of deep loss. Were the previous 6 years, when my student learned to talk, walk, run, throw that dog a ball, and share her life with her best furry friend meaningless? Let me tell you, that was an awakening for me. I, along with many of my amazing colleagues, now regularly question whether this is the vocation in which we can continue. What had started as a humanistic profession has changed us. It breaks me when I realize I can't be fully present in a moment of sorrow for another human being because I have too much work to do. You wonder what has changed because of bad policies. I have. My interconnectedness with other human beings is rushed for the sake of an experimental set of standards that were not created by people working with children. David Coleman, architect of the Common Core, once crassly explained in a conference that as you get older you realize that people really don't care about what you think or what you feel. Well I do care. I want to know that the beautiful children that fate brought into my life will leave me as better human beings.

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Our work is so important to the society in which we live. We are working with our world's most precious resource. I cannot imagine a greater profession or a profession that has a greater impact on our future. I am asking you to protect it. I am asking you to protect humanity.

Respectfully submitted,

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