

I urge the Appropriations Committee to restore the Community Plans for Early Childhood line item in the Office of Early Childhood budget. The \$20,000 funding amount that the Waterbury Bridge to Success Community Partnership (BTS) receives from the state is matched by the William Caspar Graustein Foundation. Because of this support, ten other private funders match funds in the amount of \$149,000, which translates to over 75% of BTS' backbone support. Eliminating the line item may cause some funders to pull their funding, which will be detrimental to BTS and the Waterbury community.

I also urge the reinstatement of the \$500K Parents' Trust Fund that supports the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) in our community. PLTI's core mission is to impart leadership and advocacy skills to parents while simultaneously educating them about volunteerism, civic life, and the process by which state and local governments enact and change laws. Waterbury Hospital has hosted the Parent Leadership Training Institute since 2000, and the program has trained and graduated over 190 area parents. This program helps to educate and empower our parents, who are their child's first/main teacher.

BTS is a partnership of local public and private organizations, families and volunteers with a common passion to create opportunities for local Waterbury youth to succeed in school, life and work. The partners engage families and 85 organizations to develop new approaches, share resources and work collaboratively, rather than working in silos. They work together to maximize their effectiveness, and implement common strategies and programs at their individual organizations.

Losing this funding will derail the progress the Waterbury has made over the last several years by working collectively toward their goals in helping their youth succeed.

I urge the Appropriations Committee to help reinstate the \$900K funding for forty-one Connecticut communities that is 100% matched by the

William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the Children's Fund of CT. I also ask that the \$500K cut from the Parent Trust Fund be reinstated.

Join with us at the press conference about Community Plans for Early Childhood and the matching funds of the Graustein Memorial Fund on March 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the Legislative office Building. The Waterbury community needs your support in order for all of us to continue to support our youth.

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