

Chris Mercer
Appropriations Committee Testimony
March 3, 2015

Hello. My name is Christopher Mercer.

I am a parent of two public school students. I live in Norwalk and I am here today because I believe Connecticut needs to unite and work together to put success within reach for every child.

Governor Malloy's proposed budget is a good start, but we still have a long way to go before all our public schools are meeting the needs of every child in Connecticut.

We cannot address the crisis occurring in our public school system without investments in high-quality options that improve results for students, whether that's increases in Commissioner's Network funding or growth of public charter schools.

I have a five-year-old daughter currently attending Luis Marin School in Bridgeport.

I will be the first to tell you that my daughter is bright and gifted but it is clear that she is not being challenged in the classroom. She did not have a single homework assignment for the first half of this school year.

Marin is currently a Commissioner's Network School. Students are taught with a dual language program. I am happy that my daughter is learning other languages in school. It's a great opportunity but does not go far enough.

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I want to make sure my daughter is learning in an environment that challenges her. I'm not sure why she doesn't have more homework. She should be attending a school that never misses an opportunity to help her learn.

I said earlier I am here because we need more great schools across Connecticut. One of my children has been on a waitlist for a public charter school for a few years. But I am also here, because we have power as parents to change the game. I am but one voice. I alone can only speak so loud.

I want my children to be able to attend great schools or be able to receive a better education in the schools they are currently attending.

So to all of our elected officials, please hear our concern and desperation. If you are a parent yourself than you can relate to the ways we worry about the education our children are receiving. We need to work together.

As parents, as elected leaders, as community members we must do far more— and we have the collective power to get more done! Every child deserves a great school!

So I ask you today, please expand access to great public charter schools for every child. We must do more.

Thank you.