

**Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary & Secondary Education
Public Hearing
March 3rd, 2015
Testimony Submitted by Audrey Horan of Southington, Connecticut**

Thank you Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Audrey Horan and I am a parent from the CREC Hartford Academy of the Arts High School.

I'd like to take a moment to introduce my child, Brigette. She was reading before attending Kindergarten. She was given many opportunities through primary school to participate in gifted child programs. She enjoys creative writing and has won a D.A.R.E. essay contest. She also represented her school in the town wide spelling bee. She is an amazing artist who favors drawing and her work has been published on t-shirts and programs for the local summer theater program. She participated in drama club since the 1st grade. She has been committed to a competition dance team and dance classes since age 3. She was a model student and always attained high honors grades. All this made her the target for many years. As a result Brigette withdrew from her peers and tried her best to hide under the radar.

For 9th grade, Brigette applied to attend the Academy part time and was placed in the Musical Theater Program. The local High School is very overpopulated and the teaching style was pro – independent study. Brigette found herself near to failing in many courses, unable to concentrate, stressed out and very unhappy. The one thing that kept her getting up in the morning was to know she was going to the Academy of the Arts in the afternoon. There; she felt welcomed, valued and respected as well as seen and heard. She was able to express herself without fear of intimidation or oppression. Everyone has respect for everyone else. The teachers and their teaching styles are amazing. It came as no surprise when she decided to enter the lottery again to obtain a full time space at the Academy for 10th grade.

This year, Brigette has maintained High Honors grades for two marking periods. She has completed one musical theater production and has auditioned and been selected to participate in 2 more upcoming performance opportunities.

She is a testament to the necessity for our Magnet Schools in Connecticut. I am sure you will meet many students such as mine during this hearing.

Our Magnet Schools are worth the cost. They are providing an invaluable service. They are molding the creative minds of tomorrow. They are easing some of the overcrowding at our town's public schools and avoiding overcrowding within by utilizing the lottery system of entry. We need these alternatives in public schooling for our children. The State of Connecticut will be gaining when these children enter College and ultimately the workforce; prepared to inherit our businesses, industries, government and the arts.