

Greetings Senators Bye & Representative Walker,

I hope this finds you well. Unfortunately, due to work and travel I could not attend the public hearing regarding Magnet School Funding. Please see my brief story below as a parent of a 2nd grade student who is a CT Magnet School Student.

My name is Donna Thompson-Bennett and I am a resident of Bridgeport. I offer you my testimony for consideration through the lens of my most important leadership position-Ahmad's mom. Ahmad is my 7 year old who is a second grade student at Six to Six Magnet/Thurgood Marshall Middle School in Bridgeport. He has been fortunate to attend this student centered, community conscious STEM school since pre-school. Like many parents I believe my son with his sunlight smile, vibrant personality and bright mind is special. As Ahmad's mom along with his dad I have learned that our special one learns differently and has special educational needs to be addressed. Ahmad has a speech & language delay and is a developing reader who is not at the Common Core Standard benchmark for 2nd graders yet. However, because of our family partnership with the dedicated educators of Six to Six Magnet and Bridgeport's Special Education Department we believe that Ahmad can and will close this gap. His classroom teacher, speech & language pathologists and literacy resource teacher work together as a unified team to meet Ahmad where he is while simultaneously developing his academic capacity to achieve the next level or beyond. They do this by engaging him in styles of learning and accommodations that support his academic growth and success. His educators are open to his analytical, kinesthetic and musical intelligence as pathways to his learning. They celebrate his above level literacy comprehension and math mastery as they scaffold his reading development. They welcome us as authentic partners in this shared education journey with Ahmad. Ahmad shares with them our family mantra & his commitment to learning "I can and will do my best!" As Ahmad's mom I believe you can and will do your best to provide the funding that allows for magnet schools such as Six to Six to continue providing high quality education for all of their students and serving as a best practice education model for the state. My hope is that this best practice could be implemented at other traditional schools in Bridgeport because like my Ahmad, I believe all children are special and deserve a high quality education. So on behalf of Ahmad thank you for doing best by him and other students of CT Magnet Schools!

Peace & Love,

Donna~Ahmad's Mom
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