

Joint Committee on Education

March 11, 2015, Public Hearing on Senate Bill 1055:  
AN ACT CONCERNING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Testimony by Emilia Skrabacz, New London

My name is Emilia Skrabacz and I am a sixth grader at the Renzulli Academy. The Gifted and Talented Renzulli Academy has benefited me for almost two years now, in fifth and currently sixth grade. It has been a real privilege to experience this two-year pilot program, between the friends I've met, teachers who've taught me, and work I've grown from.

Before the Renzulli Academy came into consideration, I never thought about school a lot, subconsciously telling myself that it was a daycare; something to waste my time. When I got home seven hours later, the little homework I had would be finished in fifteen minutes. Then I'd just hang out with friends or in my house until there was another activity to do, like soccer practices and piano lessons. It was only until I walked into my new Renzulli classroom that I stopped thinking about school less as a waste of my time, and more as a place that helps me succeed. I got interesting, challenging projects that revolved around my two favorite subjects: writing and reading, while also spending more time on homework. My fifth grade teacher, Miss Gilson, also accomplished making me less shy through PowerPoint presentations and reading aloud in front of a class that wanted to learn with me.

The teachers in this Renzulli Academy also ask me how I need to learn, and what I need to learn. A huge frustration in fourth grade wasn't that I got too little work, but that even when I had to go to a fifth grade classroom asking for books to use, everything was still too easy and boring. My teacher would always make me run errands for him during parts of class I didn't need to be there for. Also, he made me sit with badly behaved students and teach them a variety of skills they already should've learned. Many other kids in that class had to deal with this, too, eventually attending the Renzulli Academy in fifth grade, and loving it.

Students everywhere should have the same opportunity I now have in school: to learn. The Renzulli Academy makes me feel more comfortable, relaxed in class, because I know that the teachers will teach us, and the students want to learn from them.

Emilia Skrabacz Sixth Grade Renzulli Academy