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Written Testimony in Support of S.B. No 1055 (Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS  
For Joint Committee on Education Public Hearing, March 11, 2015

To whom it may concern,

My name is Gaetane Francis and I have two sons in the Greenwich Public Schools. Both of my sons have had excellent experiences in our advanced learning program and I can't imagine how life would have been for them without it. I strongly support SB 1005's mission to have an employee of the CT Board of Education as a point person for state educators and parents with regards to Gifted Education. I also strongly support having the department review best practices in gifted education. It is my heartfelt hope that these two things will improve the education of gifted students across our state.

I would like to add that it is very important to have those involved in the two points stated above be well versed in gifted education. I also strongly hope that the second part of section 2 is meant to inform on a particular option (digital learning), but not restrict student choice or reduce the valuable time students spend with teachers. While both of my sons have used online learning as an educational tool, time spent in class with academic peers studying a challenging curriculum with a strong teacher is invaluable. I would not want the state to jeopardize that. In addition, while some gifted students are more comfortable staying with age peers, many find they are more comfortable when pursuing academics to be with ability peers. My younger son has flourished academically in a path that has been tailored to his needs. He skipped a grade when coming into the public schools in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. He progressed comfortably in the advanced classes that were modified as needed for him as well as in his "homeroom" class. When it was time for him to transition to middle school, it became clear that he would do best by skipping pre-algebra. At 11yo, he is very happy in 7<sup>th</sup> grade with a number of good friends and is very comfortable taking Geometry with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Thank you again for your time and attention to this very important issue,

Sincerely,

Gaetane Francis,

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