

Good morning Sen. Bye, Rep. Walker and Honorable members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Lynda Ryba. I am a 35 year resident of New Britain, a parent of 4 graduates of New Britain High School and am currently in my 6th year as a certified teacher in a New Britain elementary school.

I urge you to not accept the proposal to flat fund the education budget that will result from HB6824. This will negatively affect the students in New Britain in many ways. One very important way it will affect students is something that affected my children when they were applying to colleges as juniors and seniors at New Britain High. My oldest daughter was not only a strong student, but a gifted student athlete. She was recruited by many Ivy League caliber schools and set her sights on Harvard. She was nearly rejected by Harvard simply because of the 'reputation' and 'quality' of New Britain public schools. We were told point blank that Harvard hadn't accepted a student from New Britain in more than 25 years and they had no reason to be confident that New Britain had prepared her for the rigors of Harvard. They pointed to our expenditures per student as an example of why our students were not getting the same quality of education other districts were getting. Eventually they did accept her and she had a successful academic and athletic career there. She proved that New Britain High and its talented staff had prepared her well. Her freshman composition professor actually told her to go back and thank her high school teachers for teaching her how to write so well. This was in 1999. Why am I telling you this? Because if New Britain's education budget is reduced by this proposal, class sizes will get larger and the quality of the education our students receive will decline. Certainly the perception of the quality of our education will decline. When our talented future students apply to schools like Harvard and Yale, the cards will be stacked even more heavily against them. I shudder to think of how many New Britain students have already been denied acceptance to top tier schools simply because we spend less per pupil than suburban schools. Accepting this budget will make our situation worse. How many more years will it be before a student is accepted at a top tier school simply because they attend school in New Britain?

Please don't allow our students to be discriminated against further. Help us close the gap, not maintain it or make it larger.

Sincerely

Lynda Ryba - ELD Teacher  
Smith School