

Monique Griffin
Hartford, Connecticut

Testimony for
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
Re: Governor Malloy's Proposed FY 2016-2017 Biennial Budget
March 3, 2015

Good Evening Madam Chair and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Monique Griffin and I am speaking on behalf of the CT Coalition for Magnet Schools.

As a lifelong resident of Connecticut, I know this state is committed to providing our students with an integrated, high-quality education. I am proud to acknowledge that I am a product of an awesome magnet school education. Classical Magnet: We learn not for school, but for life! This is why I chose magnet school education for my children as well. My oldest daughter, Joscelyn is in her 2nd semester at Capital, my daughter J. Cherie is in her junior year at Classical, my son Jarred is in the 8th grade also at Classical, and my youngest son Javon is in the 6th grade at the CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering. Education has always been a passion of mine and even more so since starting a family. I believe in and I am a strong advocate for magnet school education.

Connecticut has invested a considerable amount of money to the education and development of our students. However, magnet schools have not received an increase in funding in the past five years; not even a minimal cost-of-living increase. Yet, traditional school funding

has increased during that time. Magnet schools educate 6% of Connecticut students, but a 3% increase in state funding would only account for less than 1/3 of 1% of Connecticut's total education funding.

Stagnant funding shortens our reach and limits the number of opportunities and resources we are able to provide for our students to progress and excel. We are grateful your continued support of magnet schools and we strongly urge you to, please, increase our funding appropriately; not only for us to sustain our current level of success, but also so we can continue to breakthrough ceilings and knock down walls as we provide the integrated and top-notch education the students of Connecticut deserve. Quality education is a right, not an option; and, we have a responsibility to do all that we can to be supportive.

I fully understand that there is no "perfect" budget. Though I dare not tell you where to cut, I ask that you properly prioritize the education of our youth: food, shelter, clothing, education. I am asking you to increase your investment to the future of Connecticut by ensuring that our students have the resources and funding necessary to thrive. The more our community, our country, and our world continue to advance, the more I am concerned about the preparation of our students for the future. I believe that your increased investment in Connecticut's magnet schools will yield the positive and immense return we need for the future of our great state.

When I was here last week in support of our Connecticut Colleges and Universities, I tipped out at 10:00pm and you all continued to go deep into the night. I truly appreciate your time and consideration. Thank you for affording me an opportunity to speak before you.