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## CGA Appropriations Committee: Elementary and Secondary Education Subgroup Budget Hearing: March 3, 2015

Dear Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Appropriations Committee,

I write to support our magnet school, GEHMS, and also in support of all magnet schools in light of the upcoming meeting/budgetary hearing on March 3, 2015.

Our situation is somewhat unique. We live in East Haddam and work in Hartford. This is a 40+ mile commute. As parents we wanted our child to have a great education but we found our choices to be limited. The East Haddam school system, actually located in Moodus, has had mixed reviews over the years and is about 10 miles in the opposite direction of our house and commute. We feared that if we were called with an emergency it would take a minimum of an hour to get to our daughter. We were also very concerned about how to handle and manage the cost of child care both before and after school. We had tried to ask closer neighboring towns, where we would have had better daycare options, if we could pay their taxes to send our daughter to those schools. We were advised that they would only consider a tuition program \$19,000 for the 2014-2015 Kindergarten school year. We looked into Montessori options but they were also out of the way and very costly.

We applied to a few magnet schools to provide us with a reasonable alternative, closer to our offices, and which offer learning opportunities that individual town schools do not offer. We prayed that our daughter would be selected in the lottery. When she was selected to go to GEHMS this was truly a blessing. It answered our prayers and our conundrums with child care. But, also, the professional faculty at the school noticed that our daughter had a tough time pronouncing "c" sounds she would make them "t". I am given to understand that speech pathologists call this "fronting" words. The teacher acted quickly to get the in-house speech pathologist to do a screening and to work with her early so that she is able to quickly work to correct her pronunciation of these words. I feel that if she went to a public school this may not have been treated so quickly. Also, our daughter is a bright little girl and loves science. To have "take apart labs" even for the Kindergarteners is fantastic! Moreover, I have found that magnet schools communicate better and more frequently with parents.

We are absolutely delighted with the manner in which our magnet school is nurturing our child in Kindergarten. We are also very impressed with the professionalism of the teaching staff and the excellent way the school administration interfaces with the parents on a very regular basis. As a result, our child is blossoming in her development and love of learning.

This magnet school program has proven to be extremely successful in improving childhood learning and we hope it will continue to be funded appropriately to maintain its present high standards of teaching for our children.

Very truly yours,

