

3/4/15

Testimony Submitted by Naiomi Malay

In Support of the Parent Trust Fund and Family School Connection

- This year I became involved with a Parent Leadership Program in Middletown, which helps parents become advocates and leaders for themselves, their children, their families and their communities.
- These parent leadership training programs, including Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), Parents Supporting Educational Excellence (Parents SEE) and People Empowering People (PEP), are currently funded through a collaboration of local grants, in-kind match and the Parent Trust Fund. These programs are family civic initiatives supported by the Commission on Children.
- PLTI, PEP & Parents SEE have a proven track record for involving parents and keeping them involved. I have seen this first hand.
- Before I found this program, I found it very difficult to truly be involved in my Kindergartener's education. I did everything I could. I attended all meetings, PTA groups, school volunteer days, and teacher conferences offered, but until this program I did not feel that I had a path to actually be heard and involved in the education my child receives. I was not informed and did not know what I could do to become informed.
- Statistics show that Parent Involvement plays a huge part in improving the education of our children. This program gives parent's the skills they need to be involved. We need more programs that teach parents how to navigate the system, not less.
- The PSEE class I attend also offers a Children's Leadership Training Institute program, which has so far taught my 5 year old the importance of courage and making important life changes. The benefit that my child receives from this course, as well as seeing her parents play an active role in her education, is immeasurable.
- This program promotes family literacy and lifelong learning by bringing children and their parents together to share in the community learning process.
- This program gives parent's the skills they need to become productive members in their community. This is an investment that pays back.

- I have heard directly from other parents who have graduated from this course with new skills that allowed them to find employment, volunteer in their community, and advocate for and make needed changes in their child's school (improved breakfast programs, after school activities, etc).

- Many parent's go on to volunteer for education or community programs, which takes the burden off the state to fund jobs that would otherwise be needed to get this work done.

- Parents have a unique point of view that is needed at the table when education decisions are being made, and this program offers parent's the guidance they need to understand how the system works, shows them what they need to do next to make it happen, and gives them the confidence they need to get it done.

To Sum Up

- PLTI, PEP and Parents SEE are currently funded through a collaboration of grants including the Parent Trust Fund.

- Parent Trust dollars help local communities leverage dollars from other organizations/foundations.

- Funding is needed from the Parent Trust Fund to continue to run these extremely successful and important programs. This work is not being done anywhere else.

I ask that you oppose the governors proposed budget.

Thank you.

Naiomi Malay