

3/3/15

Testimony Submitted by Aisling O'Grady to Appropriations

In Support of the Parent Trust Fund and Family School Connection

- I have been involved with Middletown's Parent Leadership Programs for 12 years. The most recent five of these years, I have been the designated childcare worker for such. I have experienced firsthand the leadership that these programs teach. They provide parents with the tools necessary to advocate for themselves, their families, and their communities.
- These various courses - **Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)**, **People Empowering People (PEP)**, and **Parents Seeking Educational Excellence (Parents SEE)** - operate via funding through local grants, in-kind match, and the **Parent Trust Fund**. They are also supported by the **Commission on Children**.
- **PLTI, PEP, & Parents See** not only teach leadership and advocacy to parents, but to their children as well. It is truly educational and vital for families as whole units to learn about community processes, the educational system, politics, collaboration skills, and how to be successful civic leaders. Parents and children learn these skills in different lights, but simultaneously.
- I went through the **Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI)**- supplement to PLTI - in 2003, as my mother was the Parent Leadership Training Coordinator at the time. I am a prime example of learned leadership as I now testify before the legislature. I now reciprocate the leadership I learned in that I teach it to the children of each program, as well as the children I work with as a YMCA Kids Korner employee at two elementary schools.
- **PLTI, PEP, & Parents SEE** boast 400 graduates within Middlesex County. These alumni have gone on to be important leaders and advocates in their communities, boards of education, school systems, PTA's, political systems, and various non-profit and civic organizations. Graduates of the programs take their newfound knowledge and experiences and apply them in real-world situations - they get involved.
- Governor Malloy's proposed 2016-2017 budget has zeroed out the **Parent Trust Fund**. Without this funding, there is also no leverage for the receipt of funding from outside organizations/foundations. **PLTI, Parents SEE, and PEP** will cease to be offered in Middletown (as well as the 25 other sites across the state) without the Parent Trust Fund. I speak before you as a product of these programs. **PLTI, PEP, and Parents SEE** are the buttresses to the cathedral that is the Middletown community - they build a continuous support system. I ask that you work to see the **Parent Trust** funding restored to the full amount of \$500,000, and so object the governor's proposed budget.

Thank you,

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