

Name: David Herberger

S.B. No. 942 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION.

Good afternoon. My name is David Herberger. I live in New Fairfield with my family. My two children, Molly and Alex, attend New Fairfield public schools.

Thank for this opportunity to ask you formally to withdraw the proposed change to Section 16 of Bill 942.

Both of my children, and many of their friends, neighbors and classmates, have benefitted extensively from the academically rich array of interdistrict cooperative grant funded programs offered to them through Education Connection.

These interdistrict grant programs are free of charge and open to students of all academic abilities. This provides an invaluable opportunity for all students – not just the best and the brightest or not just those who can afford them. As a parent, I appreciate this immensely. Both of my kids thrive and grow through their participation in these programs. Academically, yes of course. But more importantly for them, they grow developmentally by spending quality, instructional time with diverse children from surrounding towns.

In New Fairfield, students are mostly white. At the interdistrict grant programs, not so much. Students are Black/African American, Latin American/Hispanic, Asian, Native American and mixes of all of these, which adds even more to the

diversity. The opportunity for my children to learn within this multicultural context cannot be replicated. It would be impossible for any one of us – any parent, any teacher, any organization – to create and sustain such high quality, academically rich learning experiences where diversity and decreasing racial, ethnic and economic isolation is number one on the list of priorities.

I'm sure some of you are familiar with the decades old research proving the benefits of learning within a multicultural community. In fact, just in last week's paper, there was a synopsis of the latest study showing that from the youngest age, even the most incidental exposures to diversity helps individuals feel comfortable and confident living in a diverse global world.

The interdistrict grant programs give my children this critically important exposure to diversity. And, by the way, the exposure at the programs is not incidental. It is intentional, purposeful and thoughtful. It creates lasting, meaningful change. Why take this **proven, successful** initiative away? It doesn't make sense. Whether our families live in Hartford or New Fairfield, our children need this educational opportunity.

I would also like to mention that I am a teacher in New Fairfield High School. Over the years, hundreds of my students have benefitted from Education Connection's interdistrict grant programs. As a teacher, I feel qualified to comment on the high academic standards of these programs. I have seen the immeasurable good, *the experiential educational opportunity*, that results from their participation.

Please, I ask that you withdraw the proposed change to Section 16 of Bill 942.

Thank you.