

Dear Chairs Fleischmann and Slossberg and Members of the Education Committee:

I am a parent of four children in the Stamford Public Schools and a taxpayer in Stamford. I am writing in support of a moratorium on charter schools as proposed in S.B. 1096. As you know, last year the State Board of Education approved the application for the Stamford Charter School for Excellence, despite widespread opposition from our community, including a petition signed by 921 residents and taxpayers. The content of that petition, with comments, is below my signature.

I support the moratorium on charter schools because it takes away focus and funding from improving local public schools and charter schools segregate. I know that you will hear and read testimony from several Stamford residents today, so I will try not to repeat what they have said. In addition, I know that you will most likely hear from hundreds of charter school supporters. I would like you to consider the fact that Stamford, like most communities, does not have the funding to bus residents up to Hartford today in order to get people to testify. We also cannot pay people to take a day off from work in order to testify, as some of the charter school networks do. Although we may not have the numbers of people at the hearing or the fancy t-shirts and posters, there are hundreds of Stamford residents who oppose charter schools and we hope that you will take us seriously, unlike the State Board of Education.

Our community has once again created a petition, asking for our state delegation to oppose increased charter school funding. As of today, 307 people have signed it and I am attaching the list of names to this email. The petition states:

As a Stamford voter, I urge you to oppose Governor Malloy's proposed budget which cuts funding to traditional public schools and social services, while at the same time, increasing funding to charter schools.

Governor Malloy claims to be the "education" governor, and yet, in order to offset the state's large deficit, he has proposed massive cuts to both education and social services across the state, including cuts to afterschool programs and summer school, School-Based Health clinics, the Office of Early Childhood, Higher Education, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Children and Families, and Voluntary Services of the Department of Developmental Services. Also, there is no increase in funds allocated under the ECS formula to Alliance districts such as Stamford. In addition, the proposed budget includes flat funding for Education Cost Sharing - this is basically a cut, since there is no accounting for contractual and inflationary increase. As you know, Stamford only receives 47% of the fully funded, outdated formula, a shortfall of \$11 million dollars.

Despite all of these cuts to the fundamental services that our children, young adults and families need and depend on, Governor Malloy was able to find the funds to for charter schools. He has proposed a \$12 million increase to expand the number of Charter schools statewide (including \$4 million for the Stamford Charter School for Excellence) and a \$20 million increase in charter school funding over the next two years (an increase of almost 34%), while the public schools across the state will see a cut of close to \$70 million dollars.

As you know, the approval of the Stamford Charter School For Excellence and other charter schools statewide was overwhelmingly opposed by our Stamford community and Board of Education. Almost 1000 Stamford residents signed a petition last year to oppose the opening of the school. This opposition was ignored by the State Board of Ed and the school has been fast-tracked for the 2015-16 school year.

Governor Malloy's cuts are unacceptable and the funding must be restored to help our schools continue to educate our children. The solution is not to funnel money to charter schools that simply do not and cannot serve the majority of Stamford students.

Although this petition is focused on funding of charter schools, the general feeling is that Stamford residents do not want another charter school at this time, so I support a moratorium. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. The petition from April 2014 is below.

Sincerely,

Regan Allan
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Petition from April 2014

This petition was delivered to: Education Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education and Connecticut State Board of Education

921 signatures by Stamford residents and teachers. Within 48 hours of posting this petition in March, we received 730 signatures. This is in stark contrast to the petition that the Bronx Charter School for Excellence promoted, which was circulated for over a month and had only 17 signatures.

Vote Against the Proposed Charter School for Stamford, CT

Petition by Parent Teacher Council of Stamford, CT

To:
Connecticut State Board of Education, Education Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education
To the State Board of Education:

As a Stamford resident, taxpayer and a parent with children in the Stamford Public Schools, I request that the application for the Stamford Charter School for Excellence be denied. The authors of this proposal from BCSE do not understand the needs of the Stamford community, have failed to engage Stamford residents, and misrepresent the achievements of the Stamford Public Schools while cherry picking their own successes. In Stamford we have worked very hard

to ensure that our student population represents the diversity of our residents. The proposal by BCSE for the establishment of a charter school in Stamford erases the 40 years Stamford has fought for integration in our public schools.

As a parent I fully accept the challenges that the City of Stamford faces. I fully support the efforts of our Superintendent, Dr. Hamilton, and the LOCAL Board of Education in their commitment to closing the achievement gap, to excellence in education, and to preparing all of our children to succeed in the 21st Century. I understand that this requires adequate resources. As you know, despite the student need in our district, the state only provides Stamford's public schools with less than \$600 per student in ECS funding. If our state officials want to help Stamford's students, I respectfully request that they start by fixing our broken funding systems so that our schools get the money they need to succeed. A charter school will only drain precious resources from our already financially strapped district.

I ask you today to vote against the proposed Stamford Charter School of Excellence and vote yes to Stamford Public Schools. Vote to EDUCATE ALL of our children, not just a select few.

Sincerely,
[Your name]

If you are a Stamford, CT Resident we ask you today to vote against the proposed Stamford Charter School for Excellence and vote yes to Stamford Public Schools. Vote to EDUCATE ALL of our children, not just a select few. This Wednesday, April 2nd, the State Board of Ed will hold a hearing to determine if they should approve this application. If you agree against having a Charter School in Stamford - Please Sign this petition TODAY!

Parent Teacher Council of Stamford, CT: Talking Points Against Proposed Charter School

1. STATE FUNDING INEQUITIES:

CURRENT ECS FUNDING FOR SPS: Approx. \$580 per student

CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING: Approx. \$11,000 per student

- SPS school district ALSO must pay for transportation, additional special education costs and other related services for students attending the proposed charter school.
- All of these costs will come out of our operating budget, so it will directly affect our SPS students.
- These funds should be awarded directly to SPS to support the education of ALL students in Stamford.

2. THE NEW CHARTER SCHOOL WILL NOT HELP SPS's CURRENT OVERCROWDING ISSUE:

- Our district's overcrowding crisis is now.
- Charter school is planned to open in 2015 and will only impact 112 seats (56 K and 56 first grade) in that first year.
- Charter school is directly competing for available classroom space against the City of Stamford.

3. STAMFORD ALREADY HAS PLENTY OF SCHOOL CHOICE:

- Stamford has 3 district elementary magnet schools, 1 district magnet middle school, 1 interdistrict magnet elementary/middle school, 1 interdistrict magnet high school, 1 state chartered middle school, 1 state chartered high school, 14 traditional public schools, and in Fall 2014, 1 technical high school
- Stamford is distinct in that many parents LOVE their neighborhood schools and choose to have their children attend these local schools-that is OUR choice as parents.

4. STAMFORD'S SCHOOLS ARE INTEGRATED

- Our student population represents the demographics in our city.
- We have a 10% rule for all of our schools, which is more inclusive than the state's 25% rule.
- Our schools are representative of the city's overall diversity. The administrators of Bronx Charter School do not have the experience teaching a heterogeneous population like WE DO.
- We are the model of integration.
- We do not do a "blind lottery" as SCSE is planning to do, which has been shown to increase segregation
- SCSE is also planning to specifically target our children of color and economically disadvantaged students for recruitment, which will all but ensure a segregated school

5. STAMFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAVE A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

- SPS has increased the graduation rate from 83% to 89%
- SPS has had a double digit decrease in the achievement gap on CMTs over the past 7 years in grades 3-8
- We ARE making progress

6. THE CHARTER SCHOOL PROCESS HAS BEEN FLAWED FROM THE START

- The CT Education Commissioner solicited charter school applications for Stamford and select other cities, without the Mayor or Superintendent's knowledge or input
- SPS is an Alliance district and is actively engaged with the state to close our achievement gap
- This lack of transparency undermines local control of our schools
- BCSE did not seek input from the Superintendent, school officials, the mayor or parents groups and did not visit our schools.
- BCSE's application contains many misrepresentations and several inaccuracies about our district achievements

Comments:

Equality for all SPS students.

We're not perfect, but SPS is on the right track and we don't need this charter school in Stamford. We moved to Stamford because of its diversity and that's why we stay here. A charter school like this will create segregation.

My children attend Stamford Public Schools and I disagree with the proposed charter school!

Stamford has wonderful schools. We need to put all efforts into supporting the schools and teachers that we already have, not bring in another school that will only be reaching a very small percentage of students.

Stop wasting money on charter schools and if you think the public schools are broken...fix them! Just because Dan Malloy has sold out public education on the state level does not mean we must do the same on a local level.

I am opposed to a charter school coming to Stamford, CT

We love SPS, and every resource should be made available to the system we have in place.

Stamford Public schools are working hard to educate our students with very limited state funding (less than \$600 per student). Our teachers and administrators work hard! Instead of inviting a for-profit entity to come into our city, and give them \$11,000 per student in state (taxpayer provided) funding, let's give the Stamford Public Schools the resources it needs. Additionally, Stamford families already have choice - besides public schools, we have a number of private and parochial schools plus the public magnet schools that fulfill the needs of families,

As a former Stamford PS teacher, retired after 23 years, I am adamantly opposed to inviting the Bronx Charter School to set up shop in Stamford. Who benefits? Not the Stamford students who already enjoy a variety of educational models. Not the operating budget which will have to include the services to this charter school like transportation, spec ed costs, etc. Why allow such funding inequities wherein the charter gets \$11,000 from the state per student? Why not direct those same funds to boost Stamford's operating budget for the schools that now receive about \$580 per pupil? I do not believe in privatizing education. It is not a "for profit" enterprise. It is a right and a responsibility that must be defended rigorously and strengthened in every way if we are to survive as a culture. NO to the Bronx Charter School!

Our schools are making excellent progress and the state doesn't fund our public schools enough! Give us \$11,000 a student and see what we can do!

The SPS needs the \$\$ not the charter school industry.

Stamford's public schools do not need its limited resources drained by this charter school. Furthermore, the charter is school is basically run like a private school with little accountability while using public funds. The state should be giving more money directly to the public schools.

While I generally support alternative school choices, the State funding inequity regarding this Charter School is an unconscionable proposal against our City's public school district and the 16,000 children in our city that this proposal ignores. We are proud of our school choices, diversity and steady improvement in our achievement gap. It makes bad policy for any application process to be without transparency and open local vetting and approval by our City officials, educators and parents.

We fully support the Stamford Public Schools and would prefer to see all possible resources directed there instead of elsewhere.

Tax dollars should help public schools.

Doesn't belong in Stamford, money needs to help all our kids not a select few

The charter school will take needed monies away from the Stamford Public Schools operating budget and will only educate select children who go to this school--all of the children of Stamford can benefit from this money.. Stamford schools are already integrated and have plenty of choice.

This charter school proposal will not be an efficient use of tax dollars and has not been created in partnership with our community

If the state has \$11,000 available for each of the students at the new charter school, they should be putting that money into our existing school system. Stamford does a very good job of addressing the needs of all students and the extra funds in the public school system would be very helpful. Don't take money out of our system and tax our schools further.

It's important to stop the Charter School from coming to Stamford because we don't need it. They will use the education budget but not be tied to any of the same standards.

Due to the lack of space for our children of Stamford, why would the city or state even consider bringing in other children from surrounding areas? Why do WE need to fund out of area children? No way, no how!

I believe in integrated public schools that serve ALL our children. Stamford does not need this segregated school that will serve only a handful of children

Our schools are over crowd and we need a school for just Stamford Residents that has equal learning available to all stamford residents. Look at Rogers, it's a private school for a select few!

I am a Stamford Board of Representatives Member and I strongly believe that we need to focus on continually improving the strong base of Stamford Schools we have, not keep adding new plans and strategies to the mix. There is plenty of opportunity, diversity, and solid curriculums to help all sorts of learners in our school. I'm a mother of a 2nd grader in a SPS and am very proud of the elementary programs Stamford offers. We are not lacking in our K-8 education!

Spend education dollars on all students not just those selected to attend a charter school.

I have two children in Stamford Public Schools. Lets put our energy into making the existing schools better.

If there are good ideas to improve Stamford schools, those ideas should be applied to all Stamford schools to help all Stamford students.

This school has been totally misrepresenting what they are able to do. They are not needed in a city such as Stamford which already has good systems and schools in place. What is needed is focus on improving an already strong base.

Any improvements that the Charter School wants to implement, if deemed appropriate, should be applied to all the public schools. If you need funding, maybe the money we would have had to spending on transportation for the Charter School could be used.

Fund Public Education for all students to help meet needs and work toward reducing the achievement gap effectively by helping meet the financial needs of the existing public schools which are underfunded currently. Funding charter schools effectively reduces the possibility of increasing desperately needed funds available for existing public education.

I want all funds intended for Stamford public schools be spent on all the children of Stamford.

This proposed charter school is not what Stamford needs now. We have worked hard to make our schools reflect the great diversity of our city. This charter school would upset that balance and divert funds from our district.

I am a parent of 2 elementary school students and I oppose the proposed charter school.

I do not want a Charter School being brought into my city under false pretenses and without the input of the community it wants to serve. If they truly meant well for our students they would not have proceeded in secrecy with a lack of transparency. Parents are an important part of the educational process and as such you cannot pretend to be in our best interests when you leave us out of the process. You can take your misguided ideas elsewhere. The funding that the State Department of Education wants to commit to this charter school should instead be used by our great Magnet Schools.

I want ALL of Stamford students to have the best educational opportunities possible.

I oppose the charter school in Stamford.

Because it is not a good move for Stamford and our children.

My children attend Stamford Public schools. I do not feel it is in the best interest of my children to have the proposed Charter School in Stamford. Our schools are diverse. It is the reason that I have not moved from Stamford and that my children attend Stamford Public Schools. I am disgusted that BCSE hid their application from our mayor, parents and the superintendent of schools.

I vote NO to charter school, my children love Hart Magnet their Public School

I support SPS. We do not need a charter school, SPS are fully integrated and excellent

I believe in the Stamford Public School system and do not support taking funds from our schools.

I do not support charter schools

Stamford Property owner and grandmother of 2 Stamford Public School student. I vote NO.

I am an nursery school teacher and would like to see the children I educate have the opportunity to go to schools that are well funded and functional and not have drains put on them by other interests when the existing schools don't even have what they need now.

Because it will take precious funding away from our underfunded public schools

I will not support this new charter school because it will take away resources from the traditional Stamford Schools. The State of Ct already under funds the Stamford Public Schools so giving extra money to charter schools only hurts the 15,000 Stamford Public School students.

This affects my children as well as the city of Stamford's children and all who pay taxes in the City of Stamford. Our tax dollars should not support education to benefit children in another state. Our tax dollars need and should support the children of the city of Stamford. Charters take away from public schools funding. The funds that are being used for charters can further fund high needs schools in Stamford.

Our Stamford kids deserve MORE

Let's keep the focus and budget on improving Stamford Public Schools.

Do not approve, too expensive.

Because the Stamford Public schools need more funding than what they currently receive and it is my understanding that this charter school will receive funding that far exceeds the Stamford Public Schools on a per student basis.

It is simply a bad idea. This school will not benefit the overall system in Stamford. It will simply take resources away from existing schools.

Stamford Public Schools deserve our full attention and resources. We do not need a Charter School in our community.

The current School education system is helping a lot of students in our community, changing it will only hurt everyone.

The current School system is helping a lot of students in our community, changing it will only hurt everyone.

As a public school teacher, I believe in the public school system. I believe ALL children should be given equal opportunities to a high-quality education. I believe SPS does that.

Put the money into Stamford public schools, not a new charter school.

I would like to see our existing schools in Stamford get the attention and funds that may go into this proposed program.

My children are in Stamford Public Schools and I DO NOT want for the funding to be cut for us.

I have two children in the Stamford Public School system and believe the already too limited resources should be invested in the public schools for the benefit of all our city's children.

I have 3 children in stamford public schools and am concerned about resources being allocated away from them.

Funds should go toward our existing schools for the benefit of ALL Stamford Public Schools students. The huge hit on our tax dollars is highly disproportionate to the small number of students who would be served. In addition, it would be very unfortunate to have a "segregated" charter school when our district is so wonderfully diverse (despite BCSE's uninformed claim that "racial isolation prevails" here).

I want my state and city taxes to improve CT and Stamford students education...

My daughter has many years left in the public school system and I think it is not a proper approach and or appropriation of funds from the government. It is unjust and needs to be reevaluated.

I feel this is unfair to the students in the public schools, and will take away funding available to the schools we already have. Keep our public schools vibrant. They are doing a great job, but can do even better with adequate funding.

I will not let my taxes go disproportionately to this very much unnecessary school!

Invest equally in our public schools and do not penalize our students in current schools.

We have diversity in our schools. All you have to do is walk through the halls. The money should be spent evenly for all students, not a select few. Stamford schools deserve more than what they get.

Because our schools in Stamford are very good with excellent teachers

I teach at Westover and my son attends this school as well. Funding for a chrater school will mean less funding for our public schools

My son attends Westover and the Stamford School District is overpopulated already and traffic is too congested already

It affects our grandsons in Stamford and we think that this is not good for them!

Stamford is a very diverse city and the charter school would take much away from the schools we already have in town.

This will effect my grandchildren

I have kids in the Stamford public schools. These funds should go to all children, not just to a selected few. Charter schools discriminate against certain group of kids.

Stamford Public Schools are doing a great job educating all children. There is no need for a special charter school to educate a small group of children.

My children go to the Stamford Public Schools. It is already frustrating the situation with the Magnet Schools - this is another alternative that we divert our already high taxes to a source other than our own childrens education.

This charter school is very wrong for Stamford.

I am a retired Stamford high school teacher & Stamford will be hurt not helped by bringing in this charter outfit. Stop it.

I think the public school system in Stamford is just fine. No need to separate these kids from the great schools that are already in place. In addition, let's not have this negatively impact the students that already attend Stamford schools.

Charter Schools diminish the resources of public schools. We love Stamford Public Schools.

Further strains limited public school resources for all for the unproven benefit of a few

I have been a special education teacher in the Stamford Public Schools for the last 18 years. I believe in educating all of our children equally!

This is important because I have grandchildren who attend public school and I think monies should be spent to improve the public school for the mass of children who attend.

charter schools take public money and are not controlled by the local authorities they are the end of democracy in america

We need more funding for OUR present schools. Either that or build a new school. NO CHARTER

The proposed funds should be allocated to Stamford Public Schools. The proposed charter encourages segregation by targeting "under-served" populations and offers nothing that is not already part of the Stamford Public Schools' programming.

Stamford has made significant effort to have schools balanced with a mixture of children from all ethnic and socio economic backgrounds. I believe that this same balance will not be present in the charter school proposed. As a taxpayer and parent of 2 Stamford elementary school students, I have an issue with \$11,000 in State funding going to a charter school student while current SPS

students receive only \$580 per student. The new school will not alleviate any of the overcrowding in our current school system. Several elementary schools are in desperate need of relief in this area.

Public funds should be shared by our public school students.

For the children get the best education that they need. Because they are the future of whole.

Stamford doesn't need to pay money out of our operating budget to have this charter school in Stamford. Put the charter school somewhere else. We are a very diverse population and the city services all the school population correctly already. There is nothing in the charter school model that will do anything additional to increase/improve student performance here.

Everyone should be equal

Because my children go to school in Stamford and I want the schools to keep all the funding they need. Lets make what we have better rather than replacing it with something else.

I found the diversity of Stamford Public Schools to be one of most positive and settling aspects of living here with our children. The schools have worked hard for this and have come a long way in the right direction - I strongly agree that introducing a Charter school which promotes segregation would only set them back again. It is also clear to see that the schools are constantly striving to improve on what they can do for our children. So I believe it is more important to allocate public funds to the public schools, helping them to achieve their ultimate goal.

Charters divert funding from community schools. The level of funding for this charter is excessive. Let's give those funds to community schools so they have the resources needed to help all children. Charters do not educate students with disabilities and language issues, leaving district schools with the most challenging students and families but with the least resources to serve them. Charters are antithetical to socio-economic and racially integrated schools. They have decimated public schools in other cities, like Philadelphia. Wealthy investors profit from charters. We don't need them in Stamford.

I strongly support that any funding should be made available to the schools that are currently catering to the vastly diverse population in Stamford. Such a huge spending disparity is unfair!

Don't want segregation. Don't want to have all that funding go to that school when all the schools in Stamford are underfunded by the State.

We can't afford to take any more \$ away from the public schools we already have in Stamford.

we need to focus on our public schools

A charter school in Stamford will not solve any of our overcrowding issues, nor have the proponents of this school shown they can be effective in addressing the achievement gap. It is not a solution to any of Stamford's educational shortcomings.

the school is not necessary and takes my tax dollars from public schools

Fairness in education!

Education should be equal for all- not "more equal" for some. Spending per student should be equal for all.

The funding inequity is my primary reason for opposing a new charter school. Secondly, I don't see the need. Further diluting the available funds for a school that is unnecessary is not fiscally responsible.

As it is Stamford Public schools are horrible...we need to help the currently existing public school rather than open another who is given more funds. Invest in the public schools and children and parents wont need to go to a charter to get a good education. I have lived many places and by far Stamford schools are the worse I have ever seen. really sad.

The Stamford Public School System is experiencing success with closing the achievement gap even while being underfunded by the state. We have extraordinary and dedicated teachers who have the experience in and the passion for educating all students, no matter what academic level they possess upon entering the classroom. If we had the same funding, as some Charter Schools, which supports smaller class size and additional staffing in every classroom, our students would benefit exponentially. Seeking to use our CT State Education budget to support small Charter Schools continues to under fund and to under serve the masses for the questionable success of the few. Charter Schools are marketed by discrediting our local public schools and all who support and work here. It is insulting to those who dedicate their lives educating our diverse population. Especially, when those who are disparaging our work here in Stamford probably have never stepped foot in our schools nor experienced the incredible learning environment we have create here in Stamford.

The current system and educational integration of advantaged and disadvantaged students works perfectly well. The new charter school initiative is being investigated with improperly researched data and statistics.

this particular charter school would not add anything to a city with so many choices already. this charter school would just be a negative to an already underfunded education budget (vs most cities in CT). we should be adding an International Baccolorate High School - now THAT would be an addition.

We need to focus on bettering our schools now and not neglecting them by using the money to fund a Charter School. THIS IS NOT RIGHT!

i teach public school in NYC. I am witnessing first hand what privatizing education is doing to the public school systems. They take our space and yet seem to think they don't have to adhere to the rules. Serve the few at the expense of the majority? Not on my Stmford taxpayer's dollar!!!!

All children deserve to be educated!

I believe in public education. I am wary of privatization.

Regan Allan
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