

Members of the appropriations committee,

My name is Barbara P. Greenbaum. I'm a resident of Tolland and a teacher at Arts at the Capitol Theater in Willimantic and I support an increase in magnet school funding.

In the attempt to desegregate schools in Connecticut via Magnets – schools were formed that worked not only in fulfilling their original mission but also in providing students with excellent educational opportunities. As the mother of two magnet school students I can tell you that this option helped make my son and daughter successful.

As a magnet school educator I can also tell you that I see this happening with students every single day. The reason is, when you congregate students around common passions, you end up with an engaged student body that learns. Whether it's math and science, creative writing, dance or acting, bringing diverse students together who have a passion for the same thing allows them to advance far beyond expectations.

At ACT - we problem solve, we collaborate, and we work authentically. We examine multiple sides of issues that integrate history, communication, analysis, synthesis, performance and examination, and we do this with students from a variety of socio-economic, racial, and ethnic mixes from some of the poorest areas in CT. Our students succeed.

Students and parents have noticed. According to the CT mirror, there were 22,000 students attending 61 magnets in September 2009. Today, there are almost 40,000 students attending 84 magnets.” (Mirror -1/6/2015) More and more students and parents are choosing magnets for a reason.

So what could the state be thinking in suggesting that Magnets should not be adequately funded? After all the money that's all ready been spent, it seems more than absurd to, at this point in time, decide not to provide or even increase funds for their operation and growth. Perhaps it's an issue of perception.

To imply that they take resources away from ordinary public schools suggests instead that there is a greater problem in the way that our educational resources are collected and divided. Magnet schools are a valuable asset to the public school system, not a deficit and this view indicates a genuine lack of understanding of the kind of education we need in the coming century. One size, when it comes it children, never fits all.

But the most compelling reason to continuing funding magnets is a very simple one. The state has already made a promise to the students and parents who have put their faith in this system. To break this promise, when the going gets rough, sends a very clear message to all of us. Government can't be trusted to keep the promises it's made to its children.

We need to be better than that and I know that we can be. I am asking you all not to let short term budgetary concerns obstruct a viable path to long terms solutions in providing this state with the kind of citizens we'll need to tackle the issues of the future.

Thanks you.

Respectfully submitted,

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<http://ctmirror.org/2015/01/06/school-choice-future-of-new-magnet-schools-uncertain/>