

Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary & Secondary Education
Public Hearing
February 16th, 2016

Buenas Tardes.

Muchisimas gracias representantes y miembros del Comite por darme la oportunidad de presentar mi testimonio.

My name is Claudia Bouchard. I was born and raised in Argentina. Waterford, Connecticut has been my home for the last twenty years.

I have two children, Sara Beth and Adrian. As a mother I wanted to give my children the best gift possible: Being Bilingual.

Sara Beth attended the Puentes-Bilingual program at the Regional Multicultural Magnet School in New London and is currently an 8th grade student at Dual Language Arts Magnet Middle School in Waterford. Adrian attends the Puentes-Bilingual Program at the Regional Multicultural Magnet School, he is in 3rd grade. Both LEARN Magnet Schools provide bilingual education and support to students.

Funding and Transportation have been two problematic issues for LEARN Magnet Schools. Funding has been without an increase since 2010. Transportation has also been a problem, depending on the district, transportation may or may not be provided.

Both LEARN Magnet Schools have become an extension of our Spanish Family that we did not have here in America. Bilingual teachers, instructors, staff and administrators have become like grandmothers, aunts, cousins and friends.

I have witnessed how understanding and open minded my children are when they are with people of other cultures and languages, and how proud of their culture my children are.

An improved funding formula needs to be reached so that LEARN Magnet Schools can continue to provide our communities with a greater access to educational opportunities to our families. This formula needs to include an annual increment ratio that provides the required annual funding needed to continue providing students with great learning opportunities. A transportation reimbursement of at least \$2000 needs to be guaranteed so students can continue their education at LEARN Magnet Schools.

I thank you for your time and attention and hope that an improved funding formula is reached and a guaranteed transportation reimbursement of \$2000 is granted.

Muchisimas Gracias.
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