

Public Comments to the ECS Task Force Meeting
Bridgeport, CT July 12, 2012

Gloria Tenofsky, Acting Director, Norwalk Education Foundation

Thank you for inviting the public to speak tonight. I am here as a parent of 2 children in Norwalk Public Schools and another who has graduated and is in college. I also represent the Norwalk Education Foundation as the Acting Executive Director.

As part of my public comments tonight, I'd like to ~~leave a snapshot of how Norwalk stacks up against some similar school districts. Let's take a look at Danbury. With a similar number of students and similar profile, Norwalk pays twice as much in taxes to the state and receives 13 cents on the dollar in return while Danbury receives 55 cents.~~

~~Another school district to look at is West Hartford. Their minority population is lower, their low income population is half that of Norwalk. They pay 8.4M in taxes to the state and get back over 19M, a more than 2X return on investment.~~

We are told we live in a gold coast area and have high home values. What isn't taken into consideration is the number of people in Norwalk who rent, live in subsidized housing or are living with family members. Quite frankly, that leaves our middle class footing the bill for all city services in addition to funding towns which are receiving more monies than they are paying.

Let me tell you a little about Norwalk. We are a city with a diverse population. 30% of our residents are low income. The fastest growing population in Norwalk is from South America. Norwalk is filled with hard working people, not hedge fund managers and not CEOs. We have kids who can't afford to pay to take the AP exams or the SATs. They certainly can't afford to take the fancy test prep classes. The majority of kids wear clothes from Old Navy and Kohls, not the fancy stores at the mall.

It is a regular town. We value education as evidenced by the high percentage of the city budget which is spent on education. But this is coming at a cost. We simply can't keep up with the yearly cost of living increases. Something has to give or Norwalk will no longer be able to sustain the quality of education and services needed to support our population.

Tell the story of Ryan top student lead in musicals at WTHS family struggling financially did not have \$ to take SAT 2's so only applied to state schools.

District	# Students*	% Low Income*	% Minority*	Taxes Paid to CT**	Funds Back to District**	ROI per \$**
Danbury	9874	33.4	48%	53,568,617	29,686,396	0.55
Enfield	6356	23.8	16.1	31,185,173	32,156,260	1.03
Norwalk	10,591	29.7	49	107,257,237	13,671,624	0.13
West Hartford	9990	15.1	34.7	8,410,398	19,043,677	2.26

NOTES

* Data from ConnCan.org

** Data from Income Tax vs. State Aid, CT Gov