

BARBARA RUGGIERO, PH.D
Hearing on Proposed S.B. 2
Hartford, CT
March 1, 2017

Good morning. My name is Barbara Ruggiero and I am the Executive Director and founder of Brass City Charter School in Waterbury.

I am here this morning to share my concerns, and those of the Brass City Charter School community, over Senator Bob Duff's proposed S.B. 2 which would effectively ignore an entire segment of public school children by neglecting to include schools of choice within a statewide funding formula fix.

The only way to guarantee fair and equitable treatment for all of our state's public school students is to include all public schools - including charter schools and other schools of choice – in the funding formula.

That is because charter schools are in fact public schools.

Brass City Charter School, Waterbury's only charter school, was founded to provide a rigorous academic and holistic social-emotional learning program aimed at eliminating the achievement gap for underserved students. Historically, Waterbury is one of the lowest performing districts in Connecticut and BCCS serves students exclusively from Waterbury.

Last spring our first cohort of third graders participated in the SBACs. We were the highest performing charter school in the state as well as one of the highest performing elementary schools in the state.

We are succeeding in our ongoing mission to “eliminate the achievement gap” in our state. But in order to continue the incredible work we, and other charter schools do, it is imperative that schools like BCCS be included in a comprehensive, funding fix and that our students are funded fairly and equitably.

Initially, we were hopeful that the proposals outlined in S.B. 2 would finally bring about the fairness and equity that has long eluded schools of choice. But those hopes have been shattered now that we realize that once again, our kids are being left out of the solution.

Charter schools are a part of the solution to our state's education challenges, and our kids deserve to be funded as such. And our families deserve to know that no matter what type of public school they choose for their child, that our lawmakers will choose to fund that choice equitably.

Thank you for your time, for your thoughtfulness, and for your service to our state.

Respectfully submitted,

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