

Testimony of Barbara Ruggiero
March 3, 2015

Hello. My name is Barbara Ruggiero and I am the Executive Director of Brass City Charter School in Waterbury, CT.

We are a growing school currently serving 151 students in prekindergarten through second grade. We're an extremely diverse school in a number of ways: 74% of our students are students of color, 5% of our students are Special Education, and 68% of our students qualify for free or reduced priced lunch.

When you step into our school, you see children who are developing a true love of and appreciation for learning. You see teachers who are skilled, passionate, and willing to do what it takes to reach and inspire every student. And you see an administration dedicated to providing teachers and students alike with the structure and support that they need to excel.

Special things happen at Brass City. Parents who are desperate for choice and want the best options for their children see that.

We started this school year at full enrollment, with 71 students on our waitlist. Our waitlist grows longer every day. Because of space constraints due to our small facility we know that we will outgrow our current facility in a few short years. Current funding makes it almost impossible to secure a facility that will meet our needs.

Although I'm excited about the great things happening at Brass City and the desire that so many families have to be a part of this, I'm heartbroken for every child we have to turn away.

Without further help to invest in facilities we'll be unable to continue to accommodate families who want to exercise their right to choose the best option for their children.

We need your help to ensure that parents and the children of Waterbury continue to have access to a school that is dedicated to a rigorous academic program that will prepare students with 21st century skills and close the achievement gap.

This won't happen without your support, and I know that I speak for hundreds of parents and students in Waterbury who are desperate for a school like Brass City Charter. We hope you will stand up as their champion and help our school continue to grow.

Thank you for your time.