



CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
TESTIMONY OF CHARLENE REID, STAMFORD CHARTER SCHOOL FOR EXCELLENCE
MARCH 3, 2015

Chairwoman Walker, Chairwoman Bye, and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Charlene Reid, and I am the Executive Director for Stamford Charter School for Excellence.

Last spring, the state Board of Education unanimously approved our school to open this fall. It was an emotional moment after months of hard work. But we knew the work was far from over, and that another hurdle would be obtaining the state funding necessary to open our doors.

We are thankful that Governor Malloy's budget includes funding for Stamford Charter School for Excellence and the other charter schools that were approved last year. While we recognize the huge financial challenges Connecticut is facing, funding schools that were already approved is the only fair course to take. We respectfully ask that the state legislature approve this funding in the budget.

We are ready to get to work educating Stamford's children. Stamford Charter School for Excellence is modeled after the Bronx Charter School for Excellence, that – despite being located in one of the poorest neighborhoods in New York City – is helping students achieve greatness. Due to our ability to innovate and our rigorous academics, our children are growing by leaps and bounds and our school earned a National Blue Ribbon award in 2012. But we don't just want *our* kids to excel. In the Bronx, we partner with district schools to share best practices and collaborate in a way that is beneficial to both schools, teachers, and more importantly, more of the city's children. This is the model we plan to adopt in Stamford as well.

We all know that the stakes are grave for the children and families in the state of Connecticut. Educating all kids to the best of our ability is of the greatest importance. For over a decade our charter school has been supporting and inspiring children to achieve their dreams. We are committed to inspiring all students in Connecticut.

There are 15 schools in Stamford that are among the neediest in the state academically and SCSE will be a lifeline to children and families who have not had educational options in the past. They deserve this school. They're counting on this school. Stamford families are asking for our school. Stamford families are demanding a school like the Stamford Charter School for Excellence.

But we can't do this alone. Our student's families need your help. We need the funding that was promised to us last year to do this important work of educating children. Education is the best investment we can make, and our children cannot wait. Please protect this funding for our school so that all Stamford's children are afforded educational excellence. Thank you.