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May 1st, 2023

Dear Hon. Senator Douglas McCrory, Hon. State Representative Jeff Currey, Hon. Speaker of the House Matthew D. Ritter, Hon. House Minority Leader Senator Kevin Kelly, Hon. President Pro Tempore Senator Martin Looney, Hon. Senate Minority Leader State Representative Vincent Candelora, and Education Committee Members,

The arts are critical in the development of our children. This is acknowledged in the [use of the acronym STEAM](#) by our own Department of Education which includes the arts as a key building block of education along with STEM.

The Educational Center for the Arts (ECA) plays a critical role in fostering arts education in the Greater New Haven area. Many notable musicians, artists, writers, and dancers have been trained at this world class supplemental educational program - [Christian Sands](#), [Wayne Escoffery](#), and [Craig Hartley](#), to name a few. The return on investment into ECA as a magnet school has been realized many times over, given these artists' contributions to society, not to mention the hundreds of students, myself included, who have experienced ECA as a safe haven for individual and artistic exploration.

The [2018 state legislature decision](#) to remove magnet school funding to ECA for students attending other magnet schools is unfair. It is targeted specifically at ECA which not a full-time alternative to high school. Rather, it is a part-time program from 1-4pm for high school students enrolled in other schools. This restriction limits ECA's ability to attract students, given the high number of magnet schools in New Haven - a good thing that the city should not be punished for. I ask that this restriction be reversed and lifted in order to avoid an unsustainable loss of enrollment at this highly regarded institution.

I gained a tremendous value from the ECA program when I attended and would not have been as successful as I have been in both private industry and public service without this training. I implore the state legislature to work with ECA to open up enrollment to all New Haven Public School students and demonstrate a true commitment to the arts and education.

Sincerely yours,



Tom Goldenberg

Cc: Connecticut Department of Education Commissioner Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, New Haven state delegation, Connecticut State Board of Education