

Lisa A. Palter and Edwin DeShazo
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April 29, 2025

Dear Finance Committee Members,

We live in East Greenwich and are represented by Justine Caldwell. We are writing in support of HB 5749, which would add categorical aid for our schools in East Greenwich that are struggling significantly with an \$800,000 gap in state funding this year. It is patently unfair that a similarly-sized district with a similar tax base – Barrington, gets significantly more funding. Our students are suffering.

As parents deeply invested in the well-being and development of our students, we are particularly concerned about the impact this loss in funds will have on crucial programs such as the arts (music, theater, dance), field trips, cultural activities, and sports. These elements are not just extracurricular activities; they are vital for the holistic development of our children, offering them opportunities to grow, learn, and express themselves in diverse ways.

The absence of adequate funding threatens to undermine these programs, depriving students of enriching experiences that are essential for their personal and academic growth. Our school facilities are already in need of significant improvements, and further cuts will only exacerbate the challenges we face.

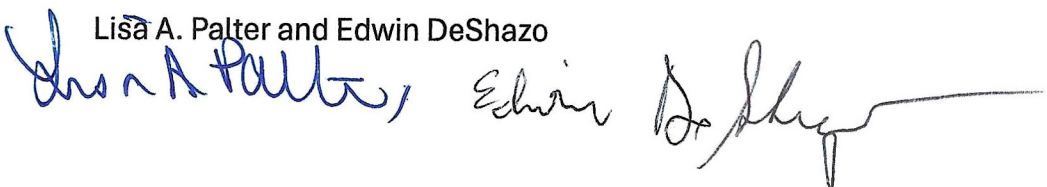
We have seen firsthand the positive impact that arts programs, cultural activities, and sports have on students, fostering creativity, teamwork, and a sense of community. The district has had to use funds to improve the school, including a ceiling that is falling down on the children, a heating system from the 1960s, outdated furniture and equipment, etc. It would be devastating to see opportunities, equipment and repairs diminish due to budget constraints. Parents and teachers already contribute their own dollars and efforts to support our schools, but this situation calls for more substantial and sustainable solutions.

I urge the Committee to collaborate and find a long-term resolution to present to the Governor's Office and General Assembly, ensuring that our schools receive the necessary funding to continue providing these essential programs. The immediate impacts for this school year are severe, and we must also consider the future of our students for the 2025-2026 school year and beyond.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Palter and Edwin DeShazo

Handwritten signatures of Lisa A. Palter and Edwin DeShazo in blue ink.