

Hello. My name is Andrea Baden. I am a professor at a public four-year university & a parent to a 3rd grade student at Hart Magnet Elementary.

As a long-time Stamford resident, I am strongly in favor of the Board of Education's proposed budget and ask the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives to pass this without revision. This request is less than or commensurate with budgets other school districts in the area, and is already pared down from the projected operating costs for next year.

As an educator myself, I am well-acquainted with the perpetual struggle we face to provide our students with a top-notch education without the resources necessary to support those efforts. Already, our public schools are operating on a shoestring, and while educators and support staff are doing an incredible job with the resources they have, I worry that about the cascading effects that a budget cut — in any amount — might pose.

In the midst of the mental health crisis that others have mentioned earlier, losing para educators, parent facilitators, school administrators, student support staff, and security personnel at a time when school shootings are at an all-time high should raise concerns for everyone. If anything, we need to be investing more in student and family resources, not less. Moreover, losing special programs like instrumental music education or AP and IB programs will only discourage families from moving to Stamford or from enrolling their children in our public schools.

We live in a richly diverse city — one of many things that makes Stamford a great place to live and raise a family! But with that diversity comes diverse needs and responsibilities. Further budget cuts will disproportionately affect families and students with already limited access to resources.

I'll end by highlighting that studies repeatedly show that money matters — per-pupil spending increases student outcomes in every situation, but particularly in poor and minority students, and cities that invest more in public education attract more new families, have higher property values, have higher student success, and less crime, indicating that additional school expenditures benefit *everyone* in the community, whether or not those residents actually have children in the local public school system.

For these reasons and others that my fellow speakers have described here tonight, I implore the Board of Finance to approve the proposed budget *AS IS* as an investment, not only in Stamford's public schools, but in Stamford as a community.

Thank you for your time.

<https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/evidence-clear-more-money-schools-means-better-student-outcomes>

<https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/what-is-the-connection-between-home-values-and-school-performance>

<https://opportunityinsights.org/neighborhoods/>