



Good afternoon Senator Browne and Representative Vereb. Before I begin, I would like to thank the Basic Education Funding Commission for convening this hearing here in Philadelphia.

I am a proud senior at KIPP DuBois Collegiate Academy. I have been in the Philadelphia School system my entire academic career. My education did not start out so positive but now I have a bright future ahead of me.

When I began at KIPP I felt safe. I was forced to think about my academics as well as my character on a daily basis. I was in an environment where all teachers cared about me. Not only did they show me in school but they also gave me their cell phone numbers and encouraged me to contact them whenever I had a problem.

Before I came to KIPP in Middle School I had considered following the path of so many around me into selling drugs. It was hard to see how I could find success in academics when everyone else around me was finding success through illegal means.

When I was given high expectations and surrounded by people who not only cared about me, but taught me, I rose to the challenge. I stand/ Sit here today as someone who saw no future as a child and now has 6 college acceptances with 10 outstanding applications waiting to be considered. I will be the first person in my family to not only go to college but to graduate.

I'm here today because while I have found success in school I have noticed a difference in my school as well as many of my peers schools. Year by year youth in this city are seeing less and less resources as a result of budget cuts. For my friends in district schools they have seen fewer college counselors, nurses and teachers.

In my school we have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars this year. These cuts have meant no new text books, limited technology, cuts in student activities and loss of classes. I have struggled to get access to computers to write my college applications because there is only one computer lab for over 500 students. The teachers have taken on the greatest burden by having less planning time and teaching more classes. While I know that they want to see us do well and work tirelessly to plan for 2 and even three different subjects they are exhausted. They did all this so that we students wouldn't need to be overcrowded in classes.

No matter how much my teachers at KIPP love me and my peers this is not sustainable. No matter how much educators across this city care about all the children of Philadelphia our schools have become unsafe and there are weekly reports in the news as well as my conversations with my friends about how education has become in trouble.

I ask you leaders to make the changes necessary so that my generation can spend more time focusing on how to succeed in school rather than whether or not our schools will even exist. There are many states that have a fair funding structure that addresses students in District and Charter schools. This will allow schools and districts the ability to plan and teachers the ability to do what we students need them to do: TEACH.

Thank you.

