

Testimony of Janet Piezzo
Plainfield Public Schools, Grade 7 Math Teacher
Plainfield Education Association President
Before the State Board of Education
February 14, 2018

Good morning Co-chairs Taylor and López, Commissioner Wentzell, and members of the Board. My name is Janet Piezzo and I am a Plainfield Public Schools 7th Grade Math Teacher and the Plainfield Education Association President.

I am here today to address the Board's consideration of expanding charter schools, and the costs associated with doing this, while districts like mine are facing critical financial challenges. As a result, in the 2017 budget bill, ECS funding to Plainfield was CUT by \$1.3 million. Adding to years of underfunding, my district simply cannot meet all of the needs of our students.

Plainfield's Board of Education priorities are to provide all children a high performing education. As a result, Plainfield students have shown improved student learning on state test scores over the last 5 years and prevented becoming an Alliance district. Despite Plainfield having a 44.8 % poverty rate, children have been progressing. However, diverting money from Plainfield to charter schools is having a compound effect my school district.

- Plainfield had to eliminate late busses which is a loss of after school programs and clubs which range from providing extra help to enrichment activities.
- Plainfield had to reduce many support services which are critical for closing achievement gaps. These supports are remedial reading specialists, math interventionalists, behavior management specialists and para-educator support personnel.
- Plainfield had to eliminate summer school which is another opportunity to provide extra help and enrichment programs.
- Plainfield had to reduce the instructional calendar from 181 days to 180 days to reduce costs.
- Plainfield had to reduce secretary and custodian personnel.
- Moving forward to the 2018-19 budget, Plainfield plans to eliminate 5 teachers which results in increasing class sizes.

The impact of the state's disinvestment in education are very real. By comparison, the state continues to expand a parallel system of schools that does not provide equal opportunity to all students. The difference in the state's commitment is very stark and the public-school children who attend their local schools are the victims. I urge you to reject charter school expansion and instead restore funding to programs that help children in Plainfield Public Schools.

Thank you,