

Misty Maza

From: Public Testimony
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 4:02 PM
To: Misty Maza
Subject: Fw: BOE appointment public testimony: A. Stockton

From: Ashley Stockton <astockmon@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 2:54 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>; Eli Sabin <WARD7@newhavenct.gov>; Anna Festa <annamfesta@gmail.com>
Subject: BOE appointment public testimony: A. Stockton

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Dear Members of the Aldermanic Affairs Committee, Alder Festa, and Education Committee Chair Sabin,

My purpose in writing is to provide testimony on the reappointment of Mayor Elicker's nominee Matt Wilcox to the Board of Education. Unfortunately, due to a conflict in scheduling I cannot attend your meeting and deliver my testimony in person; instead, I plan to testify at the Board of Education meeting also happening this evening.

I am not going to comment on Mr. Wilcox's personal qualities or past record as a member of the New Haven Board of Education. Rather, I want to bring your attention to one matter of fact. Mayor Elicker has not appointed a member to the Board of Education who currently is a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in New Haven Public Schools. His most recent appointees, Orlando Yarborough and Abie Benitez do not have children enrolled in our city schools. Mr. Wilcox does not have any children currently enrolled in our city schools. In fact, of the seven members of the Board of Education, only one person has one child enrolled in New Haven Public Schools.

To deny parent representation on the Board is problematic. This coupled with the fact that BOE meetings are only held remotely; thus, excluding parents from attending and participating in person, implies that families' experiences, perspectives, and input are not welcomed or valued by the current BOE leadership and Mayor. I will share an anecdote: Last Thursday, a mother and father I have come to know through school-based activities, un-enrolled their child from NHPS (the child was a junior at one of the city high schools). Together with their parents (a doctor and a college professor), this child determined that dropping out of high school, getting a job, obtaining a GED, and then applying to college would be a more productive and engaging course of action than remaining in a high school where they did not have a teacher for two courses, and the culture of the school is so disruptive and sometimes violent that learning is greatly compromised. To reiterate, this family

felt it is a better option for their motivated child who wants to learn and go to college to drop out of high school and obtain a GED than remain in NHPS given the current leadership and circumstances. That should give us all pause.

There is no way for BOE members to know about stories like the one I just shared because they are not currently active members of our school communities. Our schools are not the same as they were five or ten years ago. We need CURRENT parents on our Board of Education to represent and advocate for our children. For this reason alone I cannot support the reappointment of Matt Wilcox. I have been deeply disappointed by Mayor Elicker's BOE appointments and unwillingness to engage and empower current parents and families of New Haven.

I appreciate the engagement and responsiveness Mr. Wilcox has shown over the course of his term and thank him for his service on behalf of our children and families. I do not support his reappointment and sincerely hope that the parents of our city will be represented on our Board of Education moving forward.

Thank you for your work on behalf of New Haven.

Sincerely,
Ashley Stockton
209 Willow Street
NHPS parent, teacher, spouse