

My name is John Carlos Musser, and I reside at 102 Lyon Street. Currently, I am a rising Junior at NHPS and an active member of the Wilbur Cross Student Council. Recently, I was elected as the student representative on the Board of Education.

I strongly advocate for a more democratic Board of Education that ensures NHPS families and voters have a genuine voice in the decisions that directly impact students like me.

Unfortunately, we, as students, have been grappling with numerous vacant teacher positions, resulting in the loss of precious months of learning or, in some cases, an entire academic year. Moreover, our bathrooms fail to meet reasonable standards, with broken utilities and empty soap dispensers.

Having a parent on the Board of Education would be advantageous because they can better understand the critical nature of these problems, both for students in general and for their child. Education, particularly at this stage of our lives, plays a pivotal role in our development from toddlers to young adults. Parent representatives with children in the New Haven system would be motivated to approach decision-making with honesty and conviction.

Furthermore, New Haven Public Schools encompass a diverse student body, comprising individuals from various backgrounds, including the Middle East, North Africa, and South American countries. Some students enroll in our schools just days after arriving, which presents numerous challenges such as language barriers and cultural shocks.

I strongly believe it is only fair to provide immigrants with the opportunity to run not only for a position on the Board of Education but also on any commission. This will allow them to represent immigrants throughout the city and address the unique problems they are intimately familiar with

Gabriella Fernando
Ward 7 resident of New Haven
455 Orange Street New Haven, CT 06511

Testimony to support a more democratic Board of Education
April 20, 2023

My name is Gabriella Fernando. I live in Ward 7 at 455 Orange Street, New Haven, CT 06511. As an undergraduate student at Yale University, I am an after school teacher at Yale's Peabody Museum, which serves New Haven public high school students across the city's schools.

I support a more democratic Board of Education where NHPS families and voters have a real voice in the decisions that impact our children. In particular, I want to shed light on the importance of including non-citizen immigrants on the Board of Ed and all city commissions.

As an after school teacher to NHPS students at the Peabody Museum's EVOLUTIONS program, I witness firsthand the diverse identities of this district's students as well as their passions for learning and their desires for autonomy in their own education. Secondly, as a student in Yale's Ethnicity, Race, and Migration major who has excelled in several classes within Yale's Education Studies program, my studies uphold racial and ethnic identity as a significant thread in the rich tapestry of equitable public education.

Today, NHPS students speak 70 different languages and report 52 different countries of origin. As of 2023, 21% of New Haven's 19,150 public school students are multilingual learners. A significant portion of NHPS students are either immigrants themselves or the children of immigrants. A study at Southern Connecticut State University shows that the number of multilingual learners in New Haven schools increased from 1 in 10 in 2020 to more than 1 in 5 in 2023 despite the district's overall population decrease, and these students are overwhelmingly concentrated within the same schools. Furthermore, NHPS has seen a 26% increase in the percentage of newcomer multilingual learners over the last 2 years, particularly from Guatemala, Ecuador, and Afghanistan. The Southern Connecticut State University study concludes that not only are Connecticut multilingual learners significantly less likely to graduate from high school than their peers, but they also overwhelmingly attend schools with the lowest Per Pupil Expenditure (PPE) in the state.

Research from Florida State University and UC Berkeley shows that a more racially representative school board creates more equitable school punishment as well as significantly increased spending on facilities in schools serving majority students of color. With a substantial portion of New Haven students being immigrants or the children of immigrants, it is imperative that immigrants be allowed to serve on the Board of Education to represent this growing community within NHPS.

I believe that the Board of Education should be more democratic and representative of NHPS parents and families. I support the following reforms: Two seats on the BOE should be reserved for parents/guardians of current NHPS students. Four seats on the

BOE should be elected by city voters and three appointed by the mayor. Immigrants should be allowed to serve on the Board of Education and on all city commissions. I thank you for your time and consideration, and hope that the Board of Education can evolve to best serve and reflect the interests of all NHPS students. Thank you for considering my testimony. To whom it may concern,

My name is Suyane- I've been a New Haven resident for almost four years and a Connecticut resident for over 20. I grew up here undocumented with my family and thanks to DACA, I'm able to have very few rights such as the right to a work permit. I have the right to work and live in the state of CT, in the city of New Haven but I can't serve my community and city the way I want to.

We all know how important and impactful local government is. Why not extend that importance and impact to folks who are the most marginalized of us? Immigrant and refugee residents of New Haven work here, pay taxes, raise families, contribute culturally and intellectually, volunteer in our communities, many for decades, and are directly impacted by the decisions of Boards and Commissions. Why not let us serve on the board too?

I write to you today urging you to please vote yes on the Expansion of Participation in board and commissions in the City of New Haven.

Thank you for your time.

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Suyane Oliveira (She/ They)

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Wellness Coordinator

IRIS- Integrated Refugee & Immigration Services

235 Nicoll Street, New Haven CT

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Ana Henriques
74 West Rock Ave

Testimony to support a more democratic Board of Education
June 19, 2023

My name is Ana Henriques. I live at 74 West Rock Ave, New Haven (CT). I have a daughter (age 7) entering grade 3 at Edgewood School and a son (age 9) entering grade 5 at Edgewood School. I am a teacher, though not with the New Haven Public Board. I write you today as I support a more democratic Board of Education where NHPS families and voters have a real voice in the decisions that impact our children.

As a New Haven public school parent, I have watched many families leave our school. Some families have gone to private schools or even to other public schools. This has been incredibly disheartening. I

feel if there were more connections with current parents, the board could make greater strides to build a stronger community.

Another way I see building a stronger community within our schools is to build strong intramural and intercollegiate sports teams. Sports should be free to participate in, should be available at schools, providing another opportunity for communities to grow together.

It is important for parents to have a voice, yes. More importantly it is important for as many different parents from a range of backgrounds to be able to share their thoughts and concerns, in order for the public schools to serve as many different communities as possible.

I believe that the Board of Education should be more democratic and representative of NHPS parents and families. I support the following reforms: Two seats on the BOE should be reserved for parents/guardians of current NHPS students. Four seats on the BOE should be elected by city voters and three appointed by the mayor. (Currently only two seats are elected by voters and five are appointed by the mayor. Additionally, there are two high school students who have non-voting seats on the Board of Ed.) Immigrants should be allowed to serve on the Board of Education and on all city commissions. (One in four students at NHPS are multilingual learners, and most of them have parents who are non-citizens, but currently non-citizens cannot serve on city boards and commissions.

I appreciate the efforts made by those dedicated to bettering our public schools, I am very grateful!

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Ana Henriques