

Dear School Committee Members,

I am requesting that you support the EPIC program. As a parent of a child with the special needs of being academically gifted, I urge you to consider all of the implications before cutting this program and negatively affecting my child (ren). As a constituent, I have always expected that the School Committee members be advocates for the quality of education for all of our students in Cranston. I also expect as advocates for education you will prioritize funding programs that are educational first and socially or athletically beneficial second.

The broad scope of the EPIC program directly enriches the lives of every Cranston student with regular in-class instruction. This enrichment and mentoring program challenges students of all levels to reach beyond the learning experience that they get during their regular classroom curriculum. Our EPIC Consultants regularly hold workshops and training in differential teaching skills for our teachers giving them the tools necessary to ensure each child excels. Our exceptional students are targeted and challenged in small group components. This all inclusive approach, together with the essential and necessary small group program for those with special needs, assists every student to perform at their highest level on NECAP and IOWA test scores.

Cranston currently allocates **less than four tenths of one percent** of its expenditures towards meeting the unique needs of our exceptional students and successfully enriching every student.

Unlike social and athletic programs that can be replaced or duplicated outside of school by numerous private organizations like CLCF, this type of education cannot be found outside of school.

It is your duty to fully examine this subject and to vote from a vantage point of being thoroughly informed. Please visit www.nagc.org to learn more. After reviewing this material, I feel confident you will consequently weigh the budget options according to your function and role as a school committee member and retain funding for this necessary program.

Facts to support my request:

-US News World Report has reported that between 18-25% of these special needs students who are in districts that do not have enrichment programs drop out of high school. That gifted children from low income families are 8X more likely than average students to drop out.

- Gifted elementary students already know between 40-50% of the material covered in their regular class.-NACG

-The Gifted Child Quarterly publication found that when pull-out gifted programs are eliminated, parents reported that their children were experiencing “a decline in energy, curiosity, and intrinsic motivation to achieve at high levels and were disengaging from the traditional curriculum”.

-It is estimated that 20-25% of gifted children have social and emotional difficulties, about twice as many as in the general population. When their needs are not met a cycle of underachievement begins. (NACG) This could result in additional IEPs for these former EPIC students and potential litigation if their special needs are not met.

Don't let it be on your watch that these children are Left Behind.

Respectfully,

