

**Testimony of (Vicki Wilcox, (Old Town Elementary School RSU 34))
In Support of LD 1527**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Vicki Wilcox. I am a resident of (Old Town) I am an elementary school counselor in a prek-5 Elementary School.

I am writing to support the community school program. These grant funds support so many of our students and families. We currently have a person running our school resource center, supporting our displaced and homeless populations because of this funding. We have an above average level of poverty in Old Town and our families depend on these services. This community school grant has also enhanced our school gardening program which in turn feeds many in our community. I am concerned about funds drying up as the mental health of our students and families is at crisis proportions.

- 1. Schools support the whole child, while increasing student outcomes.***
 - 2. Community Schools are committed to sustainability through the school gardening projects and partnering with our Community Food Cupboard and Good Shepherd.***
 - 3. We have a weekly backpack program where students bring snacks and non-perishables for the weekends and vacations.***
- Our community school liaison works tirelessly providing supports to our struggling families. She works on finding suitable housing, food, gas cards and referrals to outside services.

In closing, please consider keep these funds in place as our community deals with another mill closing and the end of many covid incentives and financial supports. Our families are struggling with substance abuse, poverty, and mental health concerns just to name a few. We need more resources to support our children.

Vicki Wilcox

Old Town