



My name is Gina Gromelski, and I live at 95 Raymond Street. I am the Co-Vice Chair of the Tokeneke PTO. I am speaking tonight on behalf of the Council of Darien School Parents. We are asking for the Board of Education to ensure budget control has capacity to provide an ELL teacher for the 2020-2021 school year. Our school system aims to support all learners, which should include the ones who cannot advocate for themselves because of a language barrier.

Since the 2015-2016 school year, the number of ELL students has increased from 11 to 66. We are excited to see this trend of diversification and feel it is very likely to continue. We know the current needs of these English Learners are being met using current SRBI and Special Education teachers. This means that an increase in services for any of those subgroups--children requiring intervention, children with disabilities, or English learners--will stretch those teaching resources to a breaking point. Instead of playing an unending game of Schedule Tetris, and crossing our fingers that we can continue to make it work, we believe it is in our students' best interests to get ahead of the problem. For this reason, we are asking you to consider increasing budget control to more realistically capture the staffing needs of our children.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight, and wish to acknowledge the work done by the Board of Education to address the needs of all of our learners. Thank you.