

## Christopher Gilson

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**From:** charles.schoenfeld@adamsknight.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 11, 2024 9:31 PM  
**To:** 119K  
**Subject:** Testimony submitted via 119Kcommission.org

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## Testimony submitted via 119Kcommission.org

**Message from:** Leslie Torres-Rodriguez

**Organization:** Hartford Public Schools

**Title:** Superintendent/CEO

**Email:** [Superintendent@Hartfordschools.org](mailto:Superintendent@Hartfordschools.org)

**City/State:** Hartford, CT

**Areas of Interest:** Absenteeism, Child Welfare, Education, Homelessness, Housing Insecurity, Justice System, Poverty, Workforce, Commission Strategies

**Groups of Interest:** Youth Ages 14-17, Youth Ages 18-26, At-Risk, Moderately Disconnected

**Subject:** Suggestions

### Message:

A place-based strategy is needed in a high-poverty community like Hartford to effectively address the needs of disengaged youth. This approach focuses on tailoring solutions to the specific context, challenges, and resources of our local community, ensuring that interventions are relevant and impactful. As you might know, high-poverty areas often face complex, interrelated issues such as limited access to quality education, healthcare, safe recreational spaces, and economic opportunities. By concentrating efforts on the specific geography/neighborhood, a place-based strategy can foster collaboration among local stakeholders who understand the unique needs of the youth and the broader community dynamics.

Cross-agency collaboration is also essential because it leverages the strengths and resources of multiple sectors, including education, health, social services, and law enforcement, to create a more comprehensive support system for disengaged youth. Sharing data and resources across these agencies ensures that interventions are informed by a holistic understanding of the challenges faced by the youth, rather than relying on schools alone to address systemic inequities. Schools, while central to youth development, cannot single-handedly overcome the broader socio-economic barriers that contribute to disengagement. By distributing responsibility across various agencies, the community can create a more sustainable and effective network of support, addressing the root causes of disengagement and fostering long-term positive outcomes for the youth.

I realize some of you might have heard me say this over the years— I know it is easier said than done. I have a vision for this and stand open and willing to engage in this macro-systemic action-oriented work.

Dr. Leslie Torres-Rodriguez

=== END OF MESSAGE ===