

As a parent of recently graduated public school students, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to ANY forced for heavily incentivized regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

We moved here in 1996 for the schools, and existing school quality is what has kept us here. I have worked in large school districts and small school districts. The small districts clearly have higher standards for their students and more parent involvement. As a staff member, working in a smaller district you are not just a “number” and are more able to make an impact on the student. School quality is noticeably lacking within larger, more regionalized districts. Opportunities for students to develop skills in extracurricular areas are more limited due to space and numbers. Bus routes to and from school are greatly increased and in Fairfield County will negatively impact our roads and highways which are also tremendously burdened during commute times.

At particular risk are our Special Education students. When they are in small, local schools, it is easier for them to make social connections with their peers. When in a larger district, with larger numbers of class sections for each grade (at a regional school), it is harder for them to develop and nurture those connections year to year. Our Special Education students have a lot at risk.

Research has demonstrated regionalizing does not ultimately save money. In fact, in the short turn costs more money and in the long term does not demonstrate savings. Look at our New England neighbors, Vermont, Maine and Massachusetts, all who have not been happy with regionalization and are switching back in many areas.

Regionalizing schools will erode the quality and the character of our local schools, which erodes the quality of our town. Connecticut has always been known for its quaint towns and excellent schools. It is the people in the towns that support the smaller schools and by regionalizing, community engagement will surely diminish.

As a homeowner, even the possibility of this, and the creation of focus groups to study this, has encouraged people to leave Connecticut or to not settle here in the first place. This has created a lot of uncertainty for home buyers.

Please oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, **and any other legislation that opens the door to regionalization of Connecticut public schools.**

Thank you,
Ginette Courtney
Wilton, CT