

Dear Sir and Madam,

I am writing to express my vehement opposition to SB 874, SB 738 (SB 454) and SB 457.

I have been deeply impressed, as a parent and an alumni, by Connecticut's public school system...and Connecticut's hometown feel in general. I moved BACK to CT because I wanted my kids to have the same experience I did, growing up in a school run by with great care by our local town. I think the loss of this local impact on the schools will hurt the overall school quality and weaken the very fabric of our town. It won't in practice save any money, as a study by the National Education Policy Center showed in 2011.

For many of us, the schools ARE our towns. It's why the hometown pride echoes strongly through the generations. Need proof? Ask a New Canaan graduate to cheer for Darien's formidable Blue Wave...and they will good-naturedly shudder. Not because they dislike Darien in reality (they do even if they won't admit it), but because the Turkey Bowl is a memory that unites many a NCHS alum across the decades. And it is why I am one of at least two dozen NCHS alum from my year *alone* who moved back to CT after school to raise our families and build our businesses. If my kid needs help in math, I call his teacher - who graduated with me. That personal touch lends a sense of "we're all in this together" that simply won't exist as control of the schools moves further from the home town. Regionalization means an educational mush - it means the nameless, homogeny of Northern Virginia - filled with non-descript counties of no discernable character (I lived there for years). Ask a Virginian where do they live and they say disinterestedly "northern Virginia" with a shrug. Ask a Nutmeg State resident and they proudly declare "Easton, Stamford, Danbury, Naugatuck, etc." and then go on to tell you about what makes their home special. Our towns' quirks and special characteristics make CT strong and make our state community vibrant... why kill that?

We would be foolish to make our state less competitive academically. These bills do just that.

Please oppose SB 874, SB 738/454, and SB 457 and any other effort to force the consolidation of CT public schools.

Thank you,
Elizabeth DeMuth