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Written testimony before the Education Committee, March 1, 2019
In Opposition to Regionalizing Small School Districts

SB 457 An Act Concerning the Size of School Districts

To: The Honorable Douglas McCrory and The Honorable Robert Sanchez, Co-Chairs, The Honorable Eric Berthel, and The Honorable Kathleen McCarty, Ranking Members and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee

While I understand the desire for the state to look for ways to save money, forced and arbitrary regionalization of our schools is not the answer. I am a 15 year member of the Region 12 School Board. We are a small district that would be forced to “further regionalize” under this bill and several others being considered. This would not however, save the state any money.

We already regionalize...

We use our RESC, EdAdvance, extensively as a cost savings measure. We work with them and many other member districts for joint professional development and curriculum writing. We also participate in joint purchases greatly lowering our costs. Early Childhood Education, Adult Education and Special Education are several other areas where we are able to work together to save money.

The distance is too great...

Our Region is rural and made up of three towns covering a very large area. Many of our children are on the bus close to an hour as it is to get to our four schools. Forcing us to send our children to schools that are even farther would not be acceptable.

Our Central Office is already lean...

In a small district like ours the Superintendent wears many hats. We do not have Assistant Superintendents; we do not even have an HR department. Our Superintendent oversees all hiring and personnel matters for the entire PK-12 district as well as curriculum and district oversight. Regionalizing our district would not result in less administration it would only rearrange where the people are and would disrupt the local control that is a long standing tradition.

I think the committee should consider taking time to study the issue. It would be more helpful to remove the barriers to organic regionalization that exist in current legislation. Also, the laws that govern our current Regions restrict the decisions we are able to make. It would make more sense to start some revisions there.

Thank you for your time and service.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Gorra