

Regarding the student population requirements discussed in SB No. 457 and SB No. 738: How anyone could believe that either of these suggestions would be better for students is beyond me. The goal of “creating of more EFFICIENT school systems” is alarming. That anyone would *want* to create regional school districts is unfathomable. Certainly it makes sense for *very small* towns to regionalize in order to provide experiences for students that would not be possible if the activity requires more students than are available in those small towns. Having an insufficient number of students can impact curriculum and extra-curricular activities at the high school level with *extra-curricular* sports programs or with high-level, specialized curriculum programs such as AP courses in a variety of subject areas and multiple foreign languages. Having a smaller number of students at a particular grade level in elementary schools can lead to combined classes, which come with a number of problems for the range of students in a combined setting. However, a town with a population of 40,000 is more than large enough to avoid all of those negative effects on students.

To decide if this bill should pass, legislators need to answer the question: will this change cause there to be a *better* educational experience for the students in the affected school systems? If the answer is “no” or “maybe”, the bill should not pass because it is not in the best interest of students. Other than to provide programs that are not possible with small numbers of students, those who are looking for “efficient” school systems” have forgotten to consider the role of schools. Their purpose is not to provide “efficient” daycare or monitoring of children during the day. The purpose is not to provide “efficient” teachers or an “efficient” program of studies. Constituents expect more than an “efficient” education for their children. Why not replace “efficient” with “effective”? If legislators want to write bills that will help educational programs in their towns, think about making laws that limit class size to an educationally *effective* number, provide sufficient *effective* materials that allow for *effective* teaching and learning. Efficiency belongs in factories where high numbers of identical parts are produced, not in school rooms where children are learning skills they will rely on for the rest of their lives.

Joann Hospod-Stanford

Avon