

My name is Jill LaGattuta and I live at 78 Brooks Rd. in New Canaan, 06840. As a parent and Connecticut resident, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to regionalization or state control of local school management.

The state is understandably looking for ways to save money. Wholesale dismantling of the current educational system , as our BOE wrote, is not the way.

Regionalization has devastated some school systems, and in the New England states it's too early to tell. West Virginia failed to save money after regionalizing and closing 300 schools between 1990 and 2002. The number of state-level administrators increased and their salaries nearly doubled; counties spent a higher percentage of their budgets on maintenance and utilities; transportation costs rose to exceed that of any other state; and advanced placement and language courses never materialized.

In addition to a desire for efficiency, I believe there are a host of well-meaning goals at the heart of these proposed bills, including, I would hope, improving education outcomes in poor school districts, and finding a way to provide more equal funding to schools. Even between poor districts there is a wide variation in the amount of funding received. Why does Bridgeport receive so little per pupil – ranking near the bottom of the state -- than Hartford and New Haven, who spend thousands more per pupil than the state average?

None of these bills begin to address these problems or many others in underperforming schools. I believe legislators would find more support by focusing on specific goals, rather than passing radically transformative bills that legislate administrative firings, mandate random regionalization along probate court lines, or set up a state Commission, with a euphemistic title, to act as judge, jury and executioner of small towns and their school districts.

I hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to regionalization or state control of local school management.