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Dear Connecticut Legislators,

I am writing in opposition to all bills proposed to consolidate school districts in CT, most specifically the Canton School District in which our family resides and our two children have attended Canton Public Schools for 12 years. When we moved to Connecticut 16 years ago, we carefully and deliberately choose Canton as our place of residence because of its small, excellent school system. I most vociferously and adamantly oppose the school consolidation legislation proposed by the Legislature and the Governor for the following reasons:

- The Canton Board of Education has effectively and responsibly managed its budget on a yearly basis resulting in high-achieving student outcomes, a vibrant school culture, penny-by-penny financial accountability and high parent satisfaction. The Board of Education also works diligently with the Town and Board of Finance on a yearly basis to provide the best education possible for its residents.
- School consolidation with its inevitable school closures take control of local schools out of the hands of locally-elected and accountable Boards of Education, and thus the residents that they serve. Local voices have been a powerful force in shaping various educational issues over the last 16 years from everything to class sizes, kindergarten format, high school athletics and other school resources. Our current Superintendent, Kevin Case, and Board of Education welcome ideas, opinions and criticism during the budget process (and throughout the year), always listening to the issues of the students and parents.
- School consolidation rips the heart out of small town life, which at its center are its schools. Generations of students attended Canton Schools, support its programs as adults and raise their own children in Canton. Its alumni are generous volunteers, business owners and civic leaders in the community. Canton High School athletic and musical events are the backbone of a vibrant cultural life in Canton.
- Bigger schools are not better schools, as supported by national research. Bigger schools require more layers of administration and communication, which translate into headaches for students, teachers and parents.
- School consolidation means loss of unique programs, classes and opportunities for students. Canton High School students, previously able to play on virtually “cut-free” teams, would be funneled onto highly competitive regional teams, thus eliminating athletic opportunities for the majority of students. The same elimination of opportunities to participate in choral or instrumental groups, school musicals, and other extracurricular programs exists as students are consolidated into fewer and fewer campuses.
- Consolidation would result in long and unsafe bus rides for students attending regional schools. Currently, the hilly topography of Canton dictates that we pay

special attention to weather conditions that our neighboring towns such as Avon, need not. Thus, in a consolidated district, buses may be forced to travel in Canton to accommodate the “majority” of students who may not need a two hour delay or snow day.

In closing, I most stridently urge the Legislature to review the issues involved in school consolidation. We have happily made Canton our home for 16 years but will not hesitate to move out of state to safeguard the education and safety of our children.

Kimberly Marze