

Re: [Senate Bill 457 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SIZE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS](#)

[Senate Bill 738 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS](#)

[Governor's Bill SB 874 AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT](#)

The above referenced proposals to regionalize school districts will have a significant negative impact on the Lyme-Old Lyme Schools. Besides the fact that the proposals suggest splitting our outstanding district in two, the idea that they will somehow save money has no merit. Other states that function with large county school systems, such as is proposed, end up with enormous districts that actually cost the taxpayer more money due to the sheer size of the organizations and the numerous layers of bureaucracy that are required to run them. Of greatest concern is the idea that we will lose our small local schools which are vitally important to the success of our students. Students could be forced to endure lengthy bus rides, attend massive schools where they lose personal connection with their teachers, and our communities will no longer have the ability to manage the education of our children. Districts across the state, ours included, already engage in regional services that save money (see below). To force this upon our schools based on arbitrary enrollment and population numbers is foolish and short-sighted. We are not opposed to the idea of regionalizing services, and in fact do so in many areas, but are opposed to the idea of the state mandating this with no data to support their actions. Forced regionalization will harm property values and quality of life in the small towns that Connecticut is known for. Many of our residents have chosen to move to our towns because of their small size. These proposals stand in contrast to the desire of those residents to live in a community that has that “small-town America” feel. The idea of local control is a concept that is rooted in our New England heritage. Please reject these proposals to ensure that decisions involving education services are made at the local level.

Mr. Ian Neviaser

Superintendent of Schools

Region #18 Lyme- Old Lyme Schools

49 Lyme Street

Old Lyme, CT 06371

(860) 434-7238 (office)

(860) 434-9959 (fax)

[neviaseri@region18.org](mailto:neviaseri@region18.org)

[www.region18.org](http://www.region18.org)

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### **Summary of Survey Results Regarding Regionalism in Southeastern CT and the Shoreline**

In a recent voluntary survey of LEARN area school districts, 12 of 21 districts reported the following shared services, programs, and cooperative regional efforts:

- **Shared Business Operations and Facilities (9 of 12)**

These operations represent a broad range of services, including but not limited to:

Food service cooperative purchasing (electricity, school supplies, oil, building management systems, and energy efficiency), workers' compensation, financial software, a finance director, liability insurance, medical benefits. Six entities share a health cooperative, ECHMC.

These cooperative efforts include partnerships between school districts and their local municipalities, between school districts, and with regional educational service centers.

School districts also cooperate with their municipalities on their facilities. For example, sharing with their town for snow removal and sanding of lots, fields and campus upkeep, emergency management drills, and the use of schools as evacuation sites. School districts also cooperate with community organizations, sharing with parks and recreation and other town organizations, classroom exchanges and before and after school programs.

- **Transportation (8/12)**

School districts cooperate between and among themselves to provide regional transportation to reduce costs and address specific needs. Multiple districts report ride sharing for special education transportation to similar special education sites. School districts also share transportation for some magnet school routes, as well as to technical schools and vocational agricultural schools. Clubs and athletics were also noted as a place where transportation has been shared.

At LEARN, fourteen of our member towns use our hub system for transporting students to LEARN magnet schools.

- **Human Resources (7/12)**

More than ½ of the districts report sharing human resources, that is a position that is shared between two school districts. Specifically, cafeteria management director, teacher of the blind, social worker, BCBA, English language learner teacher. Several report sharing positions with their municipalities including Finance Director, Department Facilities Manager, Human Resources, Grounds management, Information Technology, school resource officers, and school to work coordinators.

- **Special Education (3/12)**

A number of school districts share special education services, such as a regional parent night, the STRIVE program—between three school districts.

Several districts also report shared transitions services 18-21 and mandated services.

At LEARN, our regional educational service center, 16 school districts utilize our out-placement programs for students with autism and complex highly specialized needs. Every district in LEARN's member area use some Student Support Services, such as related services, BCBA services, instructional support staffing, Extended School Year, consultations services and technical assistance, and professional learning opportunities for educators among others.

- **Professional Development (10/12)**

The large majority of reporting school districts indicate the use of regional professional development opportunities. The majority of all LEARN area school districts participate in regional professional development opportunities, either with LEARN, with our sister RESCs, and/or providing opportunities between and among each other based on needs and interests. For example, districts report sharing professional learning in a five district consortium, a four district one including a charter school, across all LEARN districts for regional professional development days and regional offerings at LEARN, to name a few. All LEARN districts report participating in LEARN roundtables, networks and communities of practice.

All LEARN districts participate in establishing a voluntary regional calendar that establishes regional professional development days that are in common. This regional planning has promoted professional learning communities across a wide array of disciplines to help educators refine their skills.

- **Technology (3/12)**

School districts cooperate with their municipalities as well as other towns regarding technology. Specifically, districts report shared efforts in network management, security cameras and ID's and purchasing software. They also report sharing technology staff (such as network management and data management technician).

- **Other Educational Programming (6/12)**

At least half of the reporting districts shared a broad array of educational programs. These include areas such as alternative education—small school co-funded with another district, extended school year with another district, diversity training—student leadership with two other school districts, athletics—cooperative teams (gymnastics, girls swimming, boys swimming, ice hockey). Three districts have a six team hockey cooperative, among others. There are shared expulsion programs across two towns. There are shared extended school year services and social skills programs. One district also reported cooperation with community partners for a summer feeding program, benefiting a 9-town area.

There are also grant funded opportunities across school districts lines, such as inter-district grants, Title III and Perkins with LEARN, and shared federal funding for intra and inter-district magnet schools. Sixteen Districts cooperatively purchase on line learning for students through LEARN.

The Military Superintendents Liaison committee (MLSC). MSLC is a partnership between the Naval Submarine Base, the US Coast Guard Academy, the National Guard, and local school districts in New London County. It works together for the improvement of transition, as well as academic and school experiences for military and highly mobile students. This leadership group has influenced policies and established practices to support military families.