

**To: State of Connecticut Education Committee**  
**From: Tad Nygren and Tara Giblin (Town of Darien, CT)**  
**RE: Bills SB 738, SB 457, SB 874**

To Whom It May Concern:

As residents of the town of Darien whose children attend Darien's public schools, we are writing to express our strong opposition to the regionalization of Connecticut's public schools. As registered members of the Democratic party, it has come as a great surprise to us that there are currently three different bill proposals in Hartford that are under consideration when school regionalization was not even mentioned in the recent 2018 election cycle: SB 738 – Senator Martin Looney's Bill, SB 457 – Senator Bob Duff's Bill, and SB 874 – Governor Ned Lamont's Bill. To our knowledge, legislators have not asked for local input on any of these bills, and residents have not been presented with any empirical data illustrating potential cost savings or improved student outcomes. Furthermore, it is our understanding that none of the bills address educational issues and direct impact to students that might arise with school consolidations, nor do they forecast the impact that regionalization may have on how Connecticut will continue to attract new home owners and businesses.

When we moved to Connecticut from New York City almost four years ago, one of the primary reasons we chose Darien was the outstanding quality of the public schools. Each of us grew up in other states where our town and school districts were quite large—we did not feel the intimacy or connection to our schools that we have witnessed in our children. We love that our children are walking distance to their elementary, middle and high schools, and how we know virtually every family in our child's grade. These benefits of a small town school district would likely vanish if these bills passed, and with it, the potential for more young and productive families to move to our state as a place in which to raise their children.

The small size of the Darien school district provides a uniquely close relationship between residents, teachers and administrators that just wouldn't exist in a larger system, and it is a large driver for why people choose to live in our town. It is our concern that the regionalization and combination of Darien Public Schools with other local districts could adversely impact not just the quality of education for our children, but also the local real estate market in the town of Darien and Connecticut as a whole.

When it comes to the management of our town's school district, we feel that the decision to regionalize should be made by town residents. This is not an issue to be forced upon local districts by state legislators in a state where one political party – our party – is in total control. If the state wishes to cut costs in the education system, alternative proposals must be brought forward or else risk families and businesses moving out of state, choosing private school institutions, or not coming here at all. School regionalization is not the answer to solving our budget crisis, and indeed may negatively impact our economy for years to come.

We hope you will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any other legislation that paves the way for regionalization of Connecticut's schools.

Respectfully,  
Tad Nygren and Tara Giblin