

Members of the Education Committee

Thursday, February 28th, 2019

Opposition to the following proposed bills:

SB-00457

SB-00738

Dear Members,

It has come to my attention that in an attempt to reduce costs and create efficiency the aforementioned bills have been proposed. In none of my research could I find much if any reliable evidence that the outcome of regionalization would be reduced costs and increased efficiency. In fact in many locations where this has been attempted the opposite outcome has occurred, where citizens have seen even greater inefficiency and higher costs.

Even if cost and efficiency weren't a factor there is still one glaring issue facing small towns. This issue would be the complete seizure of control by the state and the now larger district. Smaller towns know their individual citizens and their students. Smaller school boards can more easily agree on what is best for their students, rather than be subject to the political infighting of a larger bureaucracy. While there is nothing wrong with sharing resources, these bills were specifically written to force regionalization. This leads me to wonder why bills giving incentive for similar towns to pair up voluntarily weren't suggested or a plan to share resources but maintain your local school board. Because of this I seriously doubt the intentions of those who proposed these bills. Will these bills help the state as a whole or is it likely to benefit their individual districts?

Allowing the state to chop and cannibalize school districts as it sees fit would be a tragic mistake. A state that I needn't remind you has so poorly managed itself financially in recent times that some of its major cities teeter on the brink of bankruptcy. Our small towns should have a say in this, after all they are the ones maintaining a balanced budget and squeezing every last ounce of educational value out of each dollar spent. Learn from them, don't punish them.

Sincerely,

E.J. Ouellette