

February 18, 2019

Dear ***State Legislative Leaders, State Senators, and CT General Assembly Education Committee Members***

It is with the utmost respect that I direct this email to you in order to express my deepest concern with regards to the proposed bills SB454, SB457 and SB458 introduced by Senor Looney and Duff and unequivocally state my **opposition** to any type of **forced school regionalization** of Connecticut public schools.

My family's personal choice of living in Connecticut was founded primarily and most importantly on the reputation the Connecticut's school system have across the country. The news of the proposed bills sent shock waves through our community and across the State as these bills directly threat the integrity of the school system which is treasured by the residents of this special State. My son Lukas (12) and my daughter Julia (7) are both students in the Wilton Public School systems. They both love their school, their teachers, excel in their studies, and are developing remarkably. As many other parents, my children's education is at the forefront of everything I do and it is critical that we do not try to fix what is not broken. The idea of **forced** regionalization will strip out parent's control over the education of their children and that is of grave concern. Also, it will unquestionably and irreversibly change the character of the Town and State we whole-heartedly love and cherish.

There are many studies which evidence that the idea of **forced regionalization will indeed NOT save money, will eliminate local control, and most importantly WILL harm school quality as illustrated below by the referenced researches.**

- The cost of combining resources, retrofitting schools, and leveling up salaries, and sorting through legal obligations will offset any savings.
(<http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=13218>)
- A 2011 study by the National Education Policy Center found the savings from school consolidation are "vastly overestimated." (<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED515900>)
- Larger school districts end up hiring more administrators, not fewer.
(<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED515900>)
- UConn found in 2010 that there is no link between efficiency and academic performance. (Heffley, Dennis, and Can Bekaroglu. "Getting More From Less, Measuring Efficiency in Connecticut High School Districts." The Connecticut Economy, Winter (2010).)
- Our district attracts the best teachers and administrators who value small districts and personal connections as much as I do. This is true of many smaller school districts.
(<http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=13218>)
- Any consideration of forced consolidation of schools must start with education quality and there is no proof that larger schools are better than smaller ones.
- Student and parent engagement declines when schools are expanded. (Zimmer, Timothy, Larry DeBoer, and Marilyn Hirth. "Examining economies of scale in school consolidation: Assessment of Indiana school districts." Journal of Education Finance 35.2 (2009): 103-127.)
- School consolidation can mean longer bus rides for students (Abalde, Macarena Ares. "School size policies: A literature review." OECD Education Working Papers 106 (2014): 0_1.) **which leads to lower achievement scores, more absenteeism, and health consequences for students.** (Voulgaris, Carole Turley, Michael J. Smart, and Brian D. Taylor. "Tired of Commuting? Relationships among Journeys to School, Sleep, and Exercise among American Teenagers." Journal of Planning Education and Research (2017): 0739456X17725148.)

We must keep Connecticut as the educational reference it currently is to the rest of the country. Can I count on your support to oppose these bills?

I thank you in advance for your time and consideration with regards to this matter which is so close to our hearts across Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Fernando Pereira and family

7 Sugarbush Ct
Wilton CT 06897
203-434-1679