

I am writing to express my opposition of SB 457 and SB 783. Small districts should not be forced by the state to regionalize. Many families, including ours, chose a very specific town to live in for a variety of reasons. One very important and compelling reason is a town's education system which is comprised of test scores, school populations and facilities, quality of teachers and opportunities for extra-curricular activities and sports. To force a family, who has purchased a home and set down roots, to send their children to another district that does not meet the needs of the family is unjust. Forcing towns to regionalize does not consider the individual towns' needs either.

The idea that regionalization is a step toward more efficient school systems is laughable. Longer bus rides in rural areas will negatively impact both instruction and a child's well-being. Children's access to sports and extracurricular activities will suffer and parental involvement will subsequently decrease. What about the likelihood of town's requiring more money to modify current buildings or create new ones due to shifting populations? And since these bills do not propose a reduction in state education funding, what is their true purpose?

This should not be a state mandate. My children are thriving in our town – have you ever heard the saying "If it's not broken, don't fix it"? Each town can and should take the necessary steps to improve upon their own district. Forcing consolidation is short-sighted, foolish and puts my children's (and many others) education at risk.

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