



Testimony on: SB 457, and SB 738  
Acts Considering the Regionalization of Public School Districts

Jeffrey F. Solan  
Superintendent of Cheshire Public Schools  
February 2019

Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Cheshire Public Schools I thank you for your service to the people of Connecticut. I regret that other obligations have prohibited me from being able to thank you and testify in person. I am submitting this testimony because I have **grave concerns about the proposal to force the consolidation of school districts** and the implications for children and families in our community. The Cheshire Public Schools is very successful by many measures. Local control of our schools allows the community to prioritize what is in the best interest of their families and is a substantial factor in that success. Our community has a significant and legitimate concern that when folded into another community, Cheshire would not be provided equal representation and, therefore, voice.

The prevailing argument for consolidation is grounded in cost. While there is limited data to support this argument, there are some who argue there is savings in consolidating central office administration. The attached document utilizes data from Connecticut's Edsight.com and outlines the number of students per district, the number of central office administrators, and the corresponding ratio of students to central office administrator. There is only one Connecticut district who has a higher ratio of students per central office administrator than Cheshire (of districts with more than 511 students). The only Connecticut district which Cheshire could be folded into and reduce their central office staffing ratio is Danbury. Cheshire has managed our administrative staffing in a way that maximizes efficiency already. We would like to continue to do so in a manner we deem in the best interest of our own community moving forward.

We understand the need to find efficiency in these challenging fiscal times, but forcing regionalization across Connecticut, which has more than 60 districts that are regionalized in varying degrees already, will create educational disruption and is unlikely to yield any meaningful savings. Decisions to regionalize, share services and find efficiencies are best left to the local jurisdictions.

Connecticut is proud of its rich tradition of providing tremendous educational experiences for our students and families. This tradition is built on community based public education in which members of each community decide what is best for their children. **I respectfully ask that you advocate ensuring that local decision-making remains at the local level.**

Thank you again for your time, consideration, and service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Solan".

Jeffrey F. Solan  
Superintendent of Schools  
Cheshire Public Schools