

108 Hawks Hill Road
New Canaan, CT 06840

February 28, 2019

Connecticut Education Committee
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Jane Xiao and I am a resident of New Canaan. I am providing this written testimony to express **my strong opposition to the three proposed bills, S.B. 457, S.B. 738, and S.B. 874**, and any other bill that may open the door to forced regionalization / consolidation of Connecticut public schools.

My husband and I moved to New Canaan from New York City in 2012, after our first child was born. We had the choice of many exemplary towns within commuting distance of New York City. We chose New Canaan specifically because of its top notch school district that EVERY parent of New Canaan takes pride in. It has been a great choice so far. My kids feel challenged at the right level at school; the teachers are very much engaged with the parent community; and parents likewise are actively involved in delivering on the mission of the school district.

The success of the New Canaan public school system owes to the localized control over how our schools are run. The New Canaan Board of Education, school administrators, teachers and staff all work in concert with parents to craft plans that work specifically for New Canaan families. It is the kind of collaboration that works because all constituents are empowered to do what suits our town the best.

And a "one size fits all" approach will kill that.

What works for New Canaan does not necessarily work for Darien, or Stamford, or Norwalk, or Wilton. Much like what works for Connecticut does not necessarily work for New York State. Forcing school systems to merge will rob Connecticut of the one of the key advantages it has over other states: great high performing local school districts. Please consider the consequences of forced consolidation: families with the means may move out of the state. Connecticut sinks into a deeper pension hole because it loses its tax payer base. Small businesses may take the business with them to other states. So the state loses even more tax dollars. Property values will plunge. And the vicious cycle continues.

I can be reached at jane.c.xiao@gmail.com, or 646-234-2178, if you would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Jane Xiao
Town of New Canaan