

HANDS OFF OUR SCHOOLS!

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senator Looney & Senator Duffs proposed bills **PSB 738, PSB 457 and PSB 874** which would force regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Having attended middle a district with large-scale systemic consolidation in A different state, I experienced first hand the negative effects of county wide run school systems: lower student achievement, disengaged teachers, higher teacher turnover and a one size fits all method of education that ignores significant variation.

This will be a boon to private schools and further erode public and local education, leaving CT kids behind! As it is people are leaving Connecticut . Don't give people another reason to leave!

As a parent of public school students in Ridgefield Connecticut, I have witnessed first hand the benefits of locally run public schools. My children are educated in a nurturing environment where teacher engagement is high, individualized student learning is understood and acknowledged and high achievement is praised. This is why we moved from New York to Connecticut!

Though I understand how economies of scale appear attractive from a fiscal standpoint, this bill attacks our most precious asset as a community and as a state - the quality of our schools. If approved, this bill would only further an additional outflow of residents, many of whom came to this state for the schools, further eroding state revenue and worsening the state's fiscal crisis. Further, I am certain that the geographical incompatibility of the surrounding towns in Fairfield County alone would increase transportation costs, thereby negating any savings offered via economies of scale and would only succeed in eliminating local control and harming school quality.

For these reasons, I implore you for your support in opposing SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874 or any other efforts to force consolidation of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely

Victoria Cowles