

To the Ed Committee regarding Senate Bill 738:

I am very opposed to this bill to regionalize the school systems of smaller communities. Trying to balance the budget by sacrificing the educational experience of our children? That is incomprehensible.

My daughter had the legal right to go to school in either Clinton or Guilford, as her father (living in Guilford) and I (living in Clinton) divorced and shared legal custody 50/50. When she was in school in Guilford (K-8), she was miserable. She was a number, a face in the crowd. She was considered by her peers to be "one of the stupid kids." With ADHD, she struggled with labels and was depressed. As we all know, relationships change lives. The large student body did not afford my daughter the opportunity to create close relationships with teachers in Guilford. She suffered. Her grades were low and so was her self esteem.

We decided to transfer her to the Clinton district in the fall of her freshman high school year. Morgan is half the size of Guilford high school, and thank God. My daughter is now excelling in academics, has dropped her label of "the stupid kid", is a 3 varsity sport athlete, and is involved with the substance abuse prevention club and community coalition. The smaller size of the Morgan school allows relationships to be built with trusted adults. The smaller size of Morgan allows students to feel that they actually have a voice, a voice with meaning. The smaller size of Morgan has allowed my once depressed child to gain confidence and to grow. I shudder to think what would have happened- or what WILL happen- if she were forced into a huge school.

If you increase the size of our schools, fewer youth will be able to play sports. Already we lose so many interested athletes when you get to high school because there are so few spots open on teams. If the high schools triple in size, an even smaller percentage of kids still get to play. The same is true for band, and theater. These PREVENTION programs that keep kids healthy and off drugs and alcohol will be available to fewer students and that is just not the direction CT needs to take in trying to balance a poorly managed budget. It is not the fault of our children. Do not take opportunities away from them simply because spending outweighed income. Our children should not suffer, and mine will should this bill pass. Please do **not** vote for it!

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