

Email To: edtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Copies to each State Representative and Senator

Subject: Opposition to SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874

February 28, 2018

Dear Connecticut Elected Representatives:

My wife and I have lived in New Canaan for over 25 years and have raised 3 children, each of whom attended New Canaan Public Schools from K-12. We moved to New Canaan because of the quality of the public schools and the quality of life in Connecticut. I am afraid that after many years of mismanagement, the State is in serious financial jeopardy, and I do not believe that the correct steps are being taken to address this fiscal crisis.

I am appalled that School Regionalization is being recommended as one of the solutions to our fiscal problems. As a resident of New Canaan and a parent of three students who attended public schools from K-12, I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other bill that opens the door to forced regionalization or incentive-based regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools.

We moved here for the schools, and existing school quality is what keeps us here. There has been no empirical data presented to illustrate cost savings, and there is no mention of improved student outcomes in any of the bills. In fact, as cited in the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving study, ***K-12 Regionalization in Connecticut*** by Orlando J. Rodriguez, "Regionalization of school districts does not always lead to reductions in expenditures – neither short-term nor long-term. Furthermore, promoting regionalization from a perspective of being cost-effective must also consider that "...students and communities may be losing their voices and power through the application of a business practice [mergers] found to have a 50% failure rate."

Additional reasons for my opposition to these 3 bills include:

- None of these bills include even one mention of school quality
- Regionalization erodes the quality and the character of our local schools, which erodes the quality of our town
- Negative impact of larger school sizes, decreasing administrator and community engagement
- Local School Boards are better equipped to make the decisions locally that will benefit each school. Local control of education is paramount.
- Hartford should address our budget deficit and remove onerous mandates and regulations, and leave school management to local communities.

I hope you share my concerns and will oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely,

Stephen Huff
New Canaan