

I stand in opposition to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874 with Connecticut public school parents and communities. I do not feel that these bills would improve our children's educations or save tax payers any money. These bills would hurt our communities in that it would undermine our voices as parents and teachers within our local schools.

These bills do not improve the academic achievements in elementary schools. The best academic achievements are in elementary schools with under 500 children and high schools with fewer than 1,000. The longer commutes do nothing to help our children with academics, it also means less parent participation and volunteering. I have volunteered in all of the schools that my children have attended, it is important to me to be a part of the school community. I love that our BOE is willing to listen to our concerns as individual parents and that they are approachable to finding solutions within our school community.

Currently in Canton as a school district we are already sharing a Director of Food Services with two other districts. We utilize cooperative purchasing agreements for fuel, equipment, textbooks and more. We recently combined our Board of Education and Town of Canton finance departments into one shared finance department. We are continuously pursuing athletic co-op agreements where it is needed. Our cost per pupil is low, even compared to currently regionalized districts. I do not feel that these proposed bills would add value to our community to entice new families to move into Canton.

I grew up in an area that was regional school district, for our elementary years we were in a small local school and for high school we joined with 7 other towns. My bus ride when I was in elementary school was 40 minutes, when I went to high school that length more than doubled to an hour and 30 minutes to an hour and 45 minutes depending on stops and weather. I would get up and get on the bus at 5:45am and arrive at school at 7:15am. My afternoon bus ride was not much shorter, unless I stayed after for sports. Which then increased the budget of bussing children home, because there was the normal bus dismissal and then a late bus to get kids home since it was nearly impossible to have parents come to pick up their children. My high school class was around 125 children, from 7 towns, the entire high school population was around 450 students. My elementary school population was around 150 students Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This regionalized school district wouldn't even meet the criteria of the bills proposed. How much longer would you expect a student to sit on the bus in the morning and afternoon to meet that criteria of the proposed regionalization?

I ask you to not only think about tax payers, but to think about our children. Is this the best for the students who are in school currently and who will be coming up in years to go to school? I feel that the education of our children to be successful members of our community, our country and of the world is more important. I do not feel that the academic achievements by regionalizing will be better than they are right now. Our children are in class sizes of reasonable proportions with multiple classes in the same grade. Growing class sizes would not be an option that I would be in favor of.

I stand in opposition to SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874 with Connecticut public school parents and communities. Thank you for taking the time to read my entry, I know that your time is valuable and I appreciate being heard.

Amanda Mainville  
Canton, CT