

SB-874 AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT.

HB-7150 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION.

SB-457 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SIZE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

SB-738 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

February 28, 2019

Dear Education Committee,

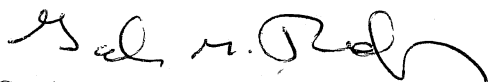
I would like to offer some input on proposals for school consolidation being considered by the legislature:

- 1) Our state has a great variety of communities. Cornwall has the lowest population density of any Connecticut town, with a lot of our land being State forest.
- 2) Cornwall Consolidated School is very important to the town not just for sentimental reasons, but as a key reason young families move here. Attracting more young people is the top priority of our town.
- 3) Our school receives \$6,000 annually from ECS payments. Teacher pension obligations are what is driving the State's fiscal woes, not ECS payment to small schools like ours.
- 4) Our local school is part of Region School District #1 (the first in the state) and it shares a superintendent with six other schools (probably the most shared superintendent in Connecticut.)
- 5) Our community and school has and will continue to study sharing services and realigning with neighboring schools. After a lengthy review our local school board voted "to keep the current arrangement for the time being" due to lack of obvious budget savings and community sentiment listed in item #2.
- 6) Our students already spend a maximum amount of time on school busses daily. Proposed consolidation plans would require more transportation which costs would likely offset any cost savings in staff reductions.

I would urge you to reject any bills that call for consolidation into arbitrarily sized districts (why 2000 students?) Our towns and school board are vigilant in providing a solid education for our students in the constraints of our rural setting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gordon M. Ridgway, First Selectman

GMR/jh

Cc: Cornwall Board of Education
Cornwall Board of Selectmen
Cornwall Board of Finance