

PROTECT CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS FROM THE DANGERS OF CONSOLIDATION

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To: Chairman McCory, Chairman Sanchez, Ranking members Berthel, McCarthy and other distinguished members of the education committee.

I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874 and any other variation of these bills.

These bills are being proposed under the false theory that school regionalization would "... reduce the cost of government...". The actual cost data for the 2016-2017 school year from Connecticut school districts contained on the Connecticut Board of Education website shows that increasing school district size DOES NOT reduce costs.

An extensive background of being engaged by numerous state governments, including the State of Connecticut, to conduct financial studies, puts me in a special position to be able to provide help to this Committee. Therefore, I quantified the actual relationship between the size of school districts and the cost per student of providing education. A comparison of all 101 Connecticut school districts with at least 1,300 students shows the following:

- All 50 Connecticut school districts with between 1,300 students and an average of 3,162 students per school district had an average cost of \$16,344 per student in the 2016-2017 school year.
- All 50 Connecticut school districts with an average of 6,672 students or more had an average annual cost per student of \$16,628 in the 2016-2017 school year.
- The 10 largest school districts in Connecticut have an average of 14,008 students and an average cost of \$16,329 per student in the 2016-2017 school year

Please note that, based on the above numbers, during the 2016-2017 school year increasing the size of Connecticut schools from the lower group to the larger group actually on average increased costs by \$284 per student.¹ While this cost increase is too small to support a conclusion that larger school districts surprisingly cost more per student than the smaller school districts, it does show that larger school district fails to produce a cost savings.

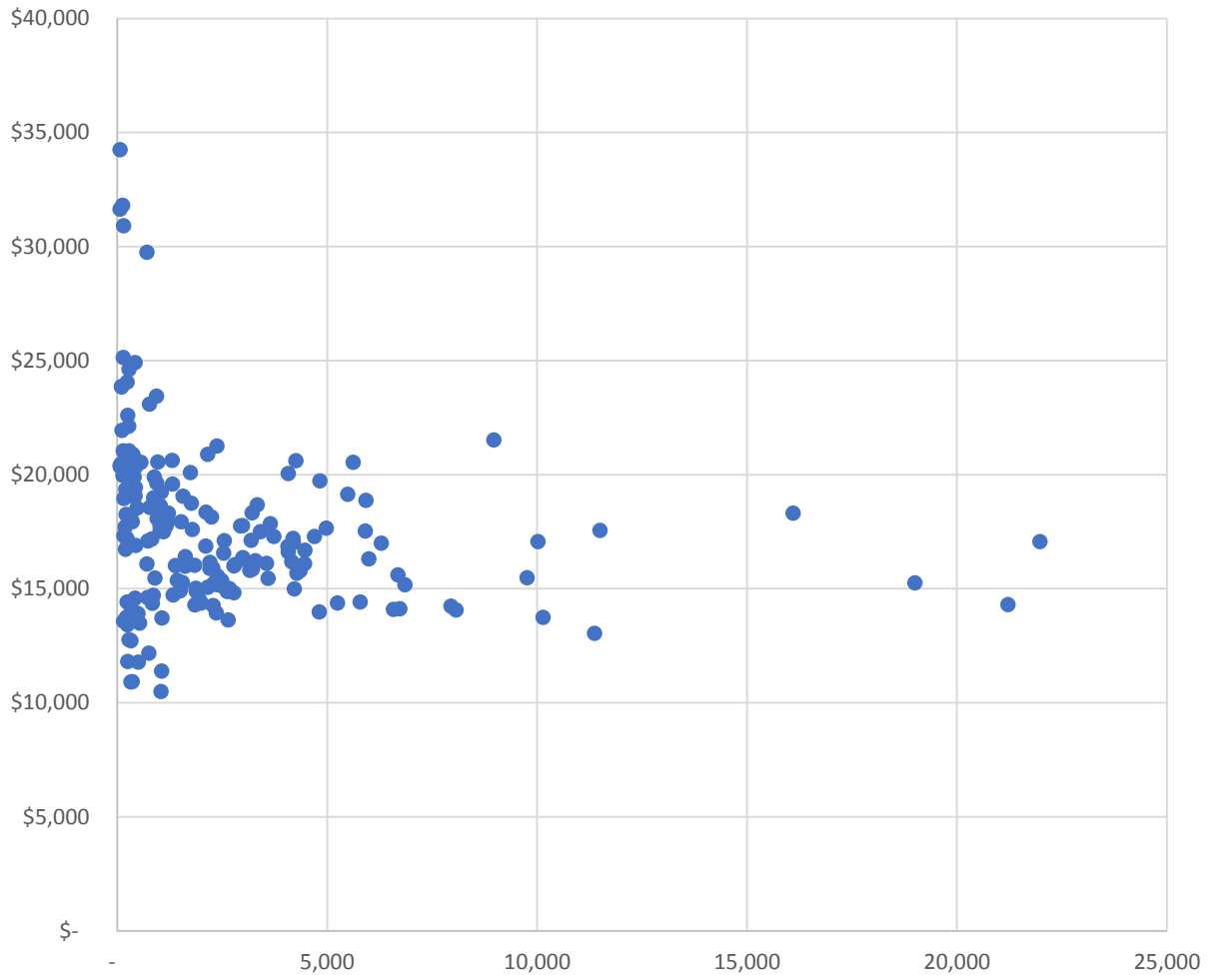
A comparison of the average cost per student in the 50 school districts with the smallest number of students to only the 10 school districts with the very largest number of students shows the costs per student are virtually identical, with only an average annual cost difference of \$15 per student. This further reinforces that an increase in school district size does nothing to reduce the cost of providing education.

Connecticut school districts with a size less than 1,300 have been and should be considered separately because a review of a graph of all the data shows that these districts are very different than the larger groups. The annual costs per student in this group are randomly dispersed between a high of \$34,236 per student on one school district down to a low of \$10,483 in another. With such wide disparity, something other than size is the reason for the variation.

The following page shows a graph of the actual relationship between the average annual cost per student and the size of the school district for the 2016-2017 school year.

¹ A total of 12 school districts out of 211 total districts had to be eliminated from the analysis because the cost per student was listed as N/A on the edsight.ct.gov website. All other Connecticut school districts were included.

CONNECTICUT SCHOOL DISTRICTS Size vs Cost per Student



All of the data used to produce the above graph and make the associated computations was obtained directly from the Connecticut education department's own website edsight.ct.gov and is included with this letter. The 2016-2017 school year was chosen because it is the most current year for which data is available. My findings are consistent with a similar conclusion reached by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving that they found based on slightly older data than I used.

Both my own personal experience in having been a Connecticut resident since 1971 and a review of available literature shows that in addition to failing to produce any cost savings, it would be highly destructive to force regionalization of schools.

Forced regionalization can:

1. "... cause the social fabric of a community to unravel";
2. increase transportation costs and at the same time reduce the time available to students for homework;
3. result in school friends being remote from the school child's home, causing impediments to social development;
4. increase costs through more, not less, administration as schools get larger;
5. provide significantly less chance for students to participate in sports;
6. have reduced parent involvement both due to greater average distances from school and overall feeling of diluted effort.

Back in 1971 when I first moved to Connecticut, it was booming. Many corporations were relocating here because of a) no income tax, b) a low 3 percent sales tax, c) beautiful surroundings with many recreational opportunities, and d) the high quality of schools. Time has eroded the tax situation, but as of now the high quality and feeling of pride associated with local schools remain. SB 738, SB 457, SB 874 and any variations of those bills would all result in serious harm to schools. Just as the destructive posturing by the politicians in Queens, NY caused Amazon to veto its decision to add 25,000 jobs to Queens, simply the act of proposing these destructive bills has likely already caused corporations to rethink plans to move or expand in Connecticut. Real estate agents have already reported lost house sales in Connecticut just because these bills are pending. For this reason, and because the actual data from 2016-2017 proves that larger school districts do not operate more cheaply, please reject

the concept of even bringing these bad bills up for a vote. We need to get Connecticut growing again by giving citizens the confidence that the quality of our schools will be maintained.

PLEASE SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGES TO OBTAIN THE COST PER STUDENT AND STUDENT SIZE DATA FOR EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT IN CONNECRTCUT. THIS IS THE DATA USED IN MY STUDY.

CONNECTICUT SCHOOL DISTRICTS		Grade	Number of Schools/ Programs	Enrollment	Per Pupil Expenditures for 2016-2017 School Year
Achievement First Hartford Academy, Inc.		K-12	1	1,066	\$ 13,712
Amistad Academy District		K-12	1	1,057	\$ 11,379
Andover School District		PK-6	1	225	\$ 17,232
Ansonia School District		PK-12	7	2,364	\$ 13,932
Ashford School District		PK-8	1	407	\$ 19,165
Avon School District		PK-12	6	3,288	\$ 16,218
Barkhamsted School District		PK-6	3	255	\$ 17,098
Berlin School District		PK-12	6	2,805	\$ 16,044
Bethany School District		PK-6	1	356	\$ 17,925
Bethel School District		PK-12	6	2,996	\$ 16,291
Bloomfield School District		PK-12	9	2,157	\$ 20,879
Bolton School District		PK-12	3	820	\$ 17,174
Booker T. Washington Academy District		K-3	1	241	\$ 13,410
Bozrah School District		PK-8	1	208	\$ 20,502
Branford School District		PK-12	7	2,983	\$ 17,758
Brass City Charter School District		PK-4	1	219	\$ 13,744
Bridgeport Achievement First District		K-12	1	1,044	\$ 10,483
Bridgeport School District		PK-12	40	21,222	\$ 14,296
Bristol School District		PK-12	36	8,073	\$ 14,066
Brookfield School District		PK-12	4	2,673	\$ 14,994
Brooklyn School District		PK-8	2	863	\$ 14,707
Cannan School District		K-8	1	73	\$ 31,627
Canterbury School District		PK-8	2	471	\$ 18,530
Canton School District		PK-12	5	1,623	\$ 15,975
Capital Preparatory Harbort School District		6 TO 12	1	254	\$ 11,799
Chaplin School District		PK-6	1	158	\$ 18,945
Cheshire School District		PK-12	11	4,358	\$ 15,781
Chester School District		PK-6	1	206	\$ 19,352
Clinton School District		PK-12	4	1,790	\$ 17,596
Colchester School District		PK-12	6	2,488	\$ 15,355
Colebrook School District		K-6	1	78	\$ 20,345
Columbia School District		PK-8	1	434	\$ 19,421
Common Ground High School District		9 TO 12	1	200	\$ 16,721
Cornwall School District		K-8	1	72	\$ 34,236
Coventry School District		PK-12	6	1,625	\$ 16,406
Cromwell School District		PK-12	4	2,004	\$ 14,364
Danbury School District		PK-12	20	11,372	\$ 13,039
Darien School District		PK-12	7	4,828	\$ 19,727
Deep River School District		PK-6	1	285	\$ 18,087
Derby School District		PK-12	6	1,387	\$ 16,005
East Granby School District		PK-12	4	866	\$ 18,981
East Haddam School District		PK-12	4	1,032	\$ 18,623
East Hampton School District		PK-12	5	1,876	\$ 15,020
East Hartford School District		PK-12	15	6,734	\$ 14,121
East Haven School District		PK-12	8	2,996	\$ 16,354
East Lyme School District		PK-12	9	2,782	\$ 15,993
East Windsor School District		PK-12	4	1,049	\$ 19,235
Eastford School District		PK-8	1	143	\$ 25,137
Easton School District		PK-8	2	882	\$ 19,888
Ellington School District		PK-12	6	2,647	\$ 13,632
Elm City College Preparatory School District		K-12	1	726	\$ 14,612
Elm City Montessori School District		PK-2	1	140	\$ 19,955
Enfield School District		PK-12	22	5,249	\$ 14,371
Essex School District		PK-6	1	371	\$ 20,887
Explorations District		9 TO 12	1	92	\$ 20,464
Fairfield School District		PK-12	20	10,027	\$ 17,063
Farmington School District		PK-12	9	4,078	\$ 16,613
Franklin School District		PK-8	1	163	\$ 17,307
Glastonbury School District		PK-12	14	5,996	\$ 16,300
Granby School District		PK-12	4	1,880	\$ 14,888
Great Oaks Charter School District		6 TO 8	1	324	\$ 18,182
Greenwich School District		PK-12	18	8,971	\$ 21,518
Griswold School District		PK-12	4	1,848	\$ 14,291
Groton School District		PK-12	13	4,461	\$ 16,092
Guilford School District		PK-12	7	3,413	\$ 17,493
Hamden School District		PK-12	20	5,493	\$ 19,128

Hampton School District		PK-6	1	105	\$	23,845
Hartland School District		PK-8	1	189	\$	17,704
Hebron School District		PK-6	2	706	\$	16,077
Highville Charter School District		PK-12	1	502	\$	11,773
Interdistrict School for Arts and Comm District		6 TO 8	1	270	\$	13,531
Intergrated Day Charter School		PK-8	1	330	\$	12,715
Jumoke Academy District		PK-12	1	753	\$	12,172
Kent School District		PK-8	1	235	\$	24,046
Killingly School District		PK-12	6	2,550	\$	17,108
Lebanon School District		PK-12	3	1,020	\$	17,736
Ledyard School District		PK-12	7	2,395	\$	15,183
Lisbon School District		PK-8	1	401	\$	19,897
Litchfield School District		PK-12	4	946	\$	19,626
Madison School District		PK-12	7	2,941	\$	17,746
Manchester School District		PK-12	19	6,291	\$	16,995
Mansfield School District		PK-8	5	1,217	\$	18,308
Marlborough School District		PK-6	1	535	\$	13,483
Meriden School District		PK-12	30	7,949	\$	14,229
Middletown School District		PK-12	23	4,702	\$	17,289
Milford School District		PK-12	16	5,926	\$	18,864
Monroe School District		PK-12	7	3,189	\$	17,109
Montville School District		PK-12	8	2,210	\$	16,154
Naugatuck School District		PK-12	12	4,281	\$	15,679
New Beginnings Inc. Family Academy District		PK-8	1	499	\$	13,911
New Britian School District		PK-12	24	10,145	\$	13,738
New Cannan School District		PK-12	5	4,260	\$	20,603
New Fairfield School District		PK-12	5	2,394	\$	15,553
New Hartford School District		PK-6	3	444	\$	16,887
New Haven School District		PK-12	60	21,981	\$	17,057
New London School District		PK-12	9	3,559	\$	16,103
New Milford School District		PK-12	6	4,217	\$	14,990
Newington School District		PK-12	7	4,069	\$	16,849
Newtown School District		PK-12	9	4,470	\$	16,685
Norfolk School District		PK-6	1	102	\$	23,863
North Branford School District		PK-12	5	1,842	\$	16,020
North Cannan School District		PK-8	1	278	\$	22,124
North Haven School District		PK-12	7	3,162	\$	15,804
North Stonington School District		PK-12	2	731	\$	17,089
Norwalk School District		PK-12	22	11,498	\$	17,548
Norwich School District		PK-12	18	3,652	\$	17,850
Odyssey Community School District		K-8	1	328	\$	10,908
Old Saybrook School District		PK-12	3	1,317	\$	19,582
Orange School District		PK-6	4	1,167	\$	17,741
Oxford School District		PK-12	5	1,952	\$	14,536
Park City Prep Charter School District		5 TO 8	1	360	\$	10,917
Path Academy District		9 TO 12	1	157	\$	13,572
Plainfield School District		PK-12	6	2,292	\$	15,210
Plainville School District		PK-12	6	2,366	\$	15,357
Plymouth School District		PK-12	5	1,504	\$	14,895
Pomfret School District		PK-8	1	377	\$	19,059
Portland School District		PK-12	5	1,337	\$	14,716
Preston School District		PK-8	2	430	\$	20,295
Putnam School District		PK-12	5	1,188	\$	17,950
Redding School District		PK-8	2	937	\$	23,439
Regional School District 01		PK-12	5	426	\$	24,914
Regional School District 04		7 TO 12	3	952	\$	18,073
Regional School District 05		7 TO 12	3	2,248	\$	18,133
Regional School District 06		PK-12	4	975	\$	18,448
Regional School District 07		7 TO 12	8	1,104	\$	17,496
Regional School District 08		7 TO 12	2	1,558	\$	15,261
Regional School District 09		9 TO 12	1	970	\$	20,546
Regional School District 10		PK-12	4	2,366	\$	15,179
Regional School District 11		7 TO 12	1	251	\$	22,595
Regional School District 12		PK-12	4	710	\$	29,737
Regional School District 13		PK-12	6	1,745	\$	20,089

Regional School District 14			PK-12	6	1,768	\$	18,737
Regional School District 15			PK-12	8	3,729	\$	17,285
Regional School District 16			PK-12	5	2,211	\$	15,885
Regional School District 17			PK-12	6	2,117	\$	18,347
Regional School District 18			PK-12	6	1,308	\$	20,619
Regional School District 19			9 TO 12	4	1,204	\$	17,968
Ridgefield School District			PK-12	16	4,984	\$	17,653
Rocky Hill School District			PK-12	6	2,621	\$	14,880
Salem School District			PK-8	1	409	\$	20,688
Salisbury School District			PK-8	1	280	\$	24,610
Scotland School District			PK-6	1	116	\$	21,931
Seymour School District			PK-12	4	2,158	\$	15,055
Sharon School District			PK-8	1	150	\$	30,904
Shelton School District			PK-12	14	4,815	\$	13,973
Sherman School District			PK-8	1	315	\$	20,567
Side By Side Charter School District			PK-8	1	236	\$	14,412
Simsbury School District			PK-12	8	4,161	\$	16,174
Somers School District			PK-12	4	1,431	\$	15,367
South Windsor School District			PK-12	9	4,188	\$	17,195
Southington School District			PK-12	22	6,582	\$	14,086
Sprague School District			PK-8	1	339	\$	14,128
Stafford School District			PK-12	6	1,526	\$	17,932
Stamford Academy District			9 TO 12	1	148	\$	21,038
Stamford Charter School for Excellence District			PK-2	1	217	\$	18,254
Stamford School District			PK-12	25	16,100	\$	18,305
Sterling School District			PK-8	1	431	\$	14,577
Stonington School District			PK-12	10	2,108	\$	16,865
Stratford School District			PK-12	29	6,856	\$	15,172
Suffield School District			PK-12	4	2,281	\$	15,898
The Bridge Academy District			7 TO 12	1	281	\$	12,760
Thomaston School District			PK-12	4	898	\$	15,464
Thompson School District			PK-12	4	1,018	\$	17,516
Tolland School District			PK-12	6	2,484	\$	15,130
Torrington School District			PK-12	17	4,201	\$	17,018
Trailblazers Academy District			6 TO 8	1	129	\$	31,797
Trumbull School District			PK-12	13	6,685	\$	15,600
Union School District			PK-8	1	68	\$	20,388
Vernon School District			PK-12	10	3,224	\$	15,858
Voluntown School District			PK-8	1	285	\$	21,038
Wallingford School District			PK-12	20	5,908	\$	17,520
Waterbury School District			PK-12	62	19,001	\$	15,248
Waterford School District			PK-12	9	2,535	\$	16,562
Watertown School District			PK-12	6	2,782	\$	14,814
Weathersfield School District			PK-12	8	3,596	\$	15,442
West Hartford School District			PK-12	25	9,765	\$	15,482
West Haver School District			PK-12	14	5,786	\$	14,416
Westbrook School District			PK-12	3	767	\$	23,089
Weston School District			PK-12	5	2,374	\$	21,253
Westport School District			PK-12	12	5,623	\$	20,541
Willington School District			PK-8	2	428	\$	19,059
Wilton School District			PK-12	5	4,078	\$	20,040
Winchester School District			PK-6	3	565	\$	20,541
Windham School District			PK-12	15	3,337	\$	18,668
Windsor Locks School District			PK-12	6	1,572	\$	19,049
Windsor School District			PK-12	10	3,212	\$	18,314
Wolcott School District			PK-12	7	2,285	\$	14,251
Woodbridge School District			PK-6	1	780	\$	18,558
Woodsstock School District			PK-8	2	842	\$	14,358
Area Cooperative Educational Services			PK-12	9	1,947	N/A	
Capital Region Educational Council			PK-12	33	8,519	N/A	
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System			9 TO 12	20	10,556	N/A	
Eastern Connecticut Regional Educational Service Center (EASTCONN)			PK-12	4	413	N/A	
EdAdvance			PK-12	3	219	N/A	
Hartford School District			PK-12	67	20,893	N/A	
Learn			PK-12	18	2,421	N/A	
Norwich Free Academy District			9 TO 12	3	2,338	N/A	
The Gilbert School District			7 TO 12	1	562	N/A	
Unified School District #1			7 to 12	15	363	N/A	
Unified School District #2			K-12	4	156	N/A	
Woodstock Academy District			9 TO 12	1	1,065	N/A	
Source: Connecticut Department of Education website							

