

February 28, 2019

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my opposition to proposed bills **SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874** on regionalization of Connecticut public schools. I am currently a parent of students in the Canton school district. My husband and I relocated to Connecticut and schools were a big factor for where we choose to live. We feel our children are currently educated in a nurturing environment where learning is individualized and teachers are highly engaged with the students. Canton is a very small town compared to where we lived perviously and I feel the small district has enhanced my children's' education and desire to learn. One of my younger children is receiving speech and occupational therapy currently at our elementary school. His teachers are working diligently with us to prepare him for kindergarten. His plans are individualized and he has created a love for learning as his confidence in his abilities improve. I am concerned that if our schools district changes these services and his familiarity and comfort within the elementary school would be effected causing a negative effect on his education. Our schools are a big part of our community not only for the students but also the staff. Many events in town are centered around school and bring the community together. There are many teachers and support staff that live in town and regionalizing our district would impact not only the children but also many other members of our town potentially forcing them to move if their jobs are impacted.

I believe that regionalization of schools should be discussed at local levels if the school districts feel that it is in their best interest to consolidate. Allowing the state to control the school district takes away the voice of the parents and their influence on their children's education as well as the town they pay taxes in. In the few years that we have been in Canton the parents were able to voice their opinion about eliminating a teacher position and also worked with the district to add stadium lights. This has not only benefitted the schools but also the whole community.

I understand that their may be an economic benefit to regionalizing school districts but there is also the potential loss for our small town. Currently Canton has the third lowest cost per pupil in the state with many regional schools with a higher ratio. Canton has already taken steps to reduce costs and works with other districts by sharing a Director of Food Services with both Region 10 and Avon, utilizing cooperative purchasing agreements for the purchase of fuel, environmental testing services, equipment and textbooks, sharing transportation with other districts for special education students, combining the Board of Education and Town of Canton finance departments into one shared finance department, pursuing athletic co-op agreements for sports teams and sharing the cost of professional development with neighboring districts. State regionalization has the potential to increase transportation cost due to longer bus rides, staff losing jobs forcing potential relocation out of town, families moving for a better school system, maintenance of unused buildings in town and potential for higher salaries based on seniority and contract negotiations negating any potential economic benefit.

For the above reasons and the many others our community has voiced please show your support by opposing proposed bills **SB 738, SB 457 and SB 874** and any other attempts on regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Sincerely,

Courtney Vincent  
Canton, CT