

I am writing to tell you as a parent of public school students, I am vehemently opposed to S.B. 738, S.B. 457 and S.B. 874. I understand the need to find ways to save our state money, but full-scale regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools is a thoroughly misguided way to go about it. It is rife with potential negative outcomes for our children, our schools and our communities. Studies have shown that large-scale regionalization has not worked in states such as our neighbors Massachusetts and New York. The forced full-scale regionalization being considered completely ignores school districts' individual needs and would be extremely detrimental in a number of ways.

I live in Easton, and moved here specifically because of the high quality schools. I have a child in the district, as well as a child in the regional ER9 district, the shared high school between Easton and Redding. One superintendent serves the Easton, Redding and ER9 districts. Yes, we are already regionalized and it works extremely well, due to an excellent and hardworking superintendent and our respective Boards of Education. I value our smaller district for our excellent administrators and teachers, many of whom live in town. No child is "just a number" here. The vast scope of regionalization being presented would completely destroy that. It would strip our towns of local control and the ability to attract the best people based on our student's needs. It would damage the quality and character of our schools, which in turn would erode the quality and character of our towns.

Since the proponents of these bills seem to be all about saving money through "efficiency", I would like point out that if any of these bills were to go forward, there is a high likelihood for the regionalization scheme to end up costing far more to implement than it would ever save. Think of the monumental task it would present- reallocating resources, retrofitting schools, personnel shuffling, salary and benefit renegotiation- to name just a few moving parts of this behemoth. The cost involved would almost certainly offset any potential savings. Our state cannot afford further fiscal missteps.

There has been nothing said by those who have proposed these bills for how the children of our state would be affected by the proposed regionalization. I have not heard one thing about school quality or student outcomes. A study by UConn in 2010 found there is no link between efficiency and student success. There is no proof that larger schools are better than smaller ones. and in fact it is just the opposite. Should this horrible plan be pushed forward, we should expect higher numbers of disengaged students, disaffected personnel and disinterested parents. This is not a recipe for educational success.

At the end of the day, as a parent and a taxpayer, I call on you to do the right thing. Do not look for your efficiencies at the expense of Connecticut's children. These bills are NOT in their best interests and I hope you will oppose them or any other bill that would pave the way for forced regionalization of Connecticut public schools. Please avoid making the mistake that other states have made.

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