

My name is Erinn, and I live in Voluntown. I moved to this town to raise my children in a great town with a great school. I realize our school is small, but it has a big impact on our town. If there is an event at Voluntown Elementary School, the entire town shows up. At our concerts, you better come early or you will be looking for parking. We love our school. We love our teachers, and a huge number of our teachers not only teach in our school but live in our town. We are a town invested in our school and our children. Regionalization will not improve the education of our children. It will not improve their quality of education. My children are receiving an incredible education, just a half a mile away from our home. I am personally acquainted with every one of our teachers and principal.

I have 3 children. One is in high school at Ellis Tech, he is learning to be a machinist and has plans to pursue engineering at UCONN. When he started high school he told me that his teachers prepared him well for high school and that the transition from middle school to high school was made easier by the good education he had. He is currently in the top 6% of his class and is thriving. Voluntown Elementary School is to thank for his success. He intends to go to high school, then to college in CT and join the work force in our state as an engineer. My daughter is an 8th grader and has decided to go Norwich Free Academy, which has a stellar reputation for academic excellence, and she intends to pursue and expand her amazing gifts in music. My youngest is a 1st grader. He is special needs and has a neurodevelopmental disorder. His special needs are complex and the school not only meets his needs, but surpasses them. They are heavily invested in him and in our family. I have seen him go from a non-verbal child to a child who is speaking in full sentences and is thriving in school.

Our town is small, but that doesn't make it unimportant. CT has been known for its good schools and both my husband and I grew up in CT. We bought our home here in Voluntown and we want to stay here. CT residents are leaving in vast numbers and quite frankly we will leave too, if our school is closed and my children are on a bus for hours. Right now, my children are on a bus for for about 30 minutes for the high schooler and 10 for the younger ones. Regionalization puts our kids on buses for hours. CT already has a shortage of bus drivers, this will only make the problem worse. Our tax dollars should not go to a regional school, but to our school. Voluntown is fiscally responsible town and our tax dollars should not be taken and sent elsewhere. Our schools do not need regionalization. Parents, teachers and students need to invest in themselves and their communities. That is what the benefit of schools that stay in our community. We love our town and need our school. Regionalization will not improve our state, it will ruin it.

Thank you.