

To the Members of the Committee and Any Others Whom It May Concern:

As a parent currently in the process of moving to Somers, CT where my children would attend Somers Public Schools, I strongly oppose all bills pertaining to regionalization including SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874 sections 1 through 4, and any other bill that proposes: i) the creation of a Commission for the purpose of studying the redistricting or consolidation of school services and school districts, ii) developing a plan for forced regionalization or consolidation of Connecticut Public Schools, iii) implementing forced regionalization or consolidation of public schools, or iv) penalizing public schools for NOT regionalizing. The reasons for my position are set forth below.

We decided to move to CT to pay lower taxes for a similar high quality education compared to what we experience in MA. As a result of all of the discussion and proposals concerning school regionalization, we have put that move on hold until this plays out. While all can agree that an education inequality gap is something we need to overcome, the current proposals to achieve that are out of touch, statistically ineffective and will in all likelihood drive worsening educational outcomes.

I have not seen any evidence indicating that regionalizing school districts will save money given the costs of combining resources and added transportation costs. More importantly, I have not seen any evidence establishing that regionalization will maintain or improve the quality of education in school districts. According to a report by Hanover Research in 2014 entitled Best Practices for School Improvement Planning, a needs assessment of a failing school district is the first step that must be taken.

A study conducted on K-12 Regionalization in CT of behalf of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving by Rodriguez Data Solutions LLC in May 2018 concludes that:

- regionalization or consolidation does not necessarily result in lower costs in the short or long term, and it can increase costs and negatively affect academic outcomes
- Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford school districts had higher than average per pupil expenditures notwithstanding enrollment greater than 15,000 in 2015-16
- CT districts with 2500-3000 students had the best educational outcomes with per pupil expenditures that were at average or below average levels in 2015-16
- parental involvement results in better academic outcomes and parents are more engaged when schools are small

I am worried that regionalization or the lack of, or reduction in, local control will result in: i) larger enrollment in schools, ii) inadequate administrative support/supervision, iii) longer transportation times for children resulting in decreased engagement, lower academic scores, and increased absenteeism, iv) a decline in the quality of the education and academic outcomes, and v) reduced teacher and community engagement.

Further, I am concerned that regionalization's erosion of the quality of the education in our local schools will affect the CT economy. If new families stop moving to CT towns because the quality of the education in the public schools has deteriorated, new businesses will not be attracted to our towns either. Moreover, existing families and businesses will leave at a greater rate than they are leaving now. This will worsen the state's fiscal crisis.

Please oppose the provisions in SB 457, SB 738 and SB 874 that pertain to regionalization, and any other legislation or legislative provisions that proposes: i) creating a Commission for the purpose of studying the redistricting or consolidating of school services and school districts, ii) developing a plan for forced regionalization or consolidation of Connecticut Public Schools, iii) implementing forced regionalization or consolidation of public schools, or iv) penalizing public schools for NOT regionalizing.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,  
Doug Ferro  
Potential Somers, CT resident