

To: Sen. D. McGrory
Rep. R. Sanchez
Members of the Education Committee, CGA
Written testimony on the topic of School Consolidation

3/1/19

Senator McGrory, Representative Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for your work, and for providing an opportunity to hear input from the community on the important topic of increasing efficiencies among and between school districts in Connecticut. This topic has clearly generated a strong response, as evidenced by the volume of feedback. Rather than reiterating what has already been shared, I am opting to highlight some key points.

First, there have been many attempts to address these issues over an extended period of time. For example, in Northeast Connecticut there have multiple referenda over decades. There are some examples of shared resources, including but not limited to shared purchasing, insurance, administrative and back office services. There are also some unresolved issues, often based on statutory stipulations. There is evidence that collaborative initiatives through School Readiness Councils have been very effective.

There are obstacles within the current statutes that interfere with fully resolving issues and implementing fully viable solutions. Such obstacles need to be reduced and/or removed. For further information please see inventory compiled by Ruth Levy. Multiple studies have already been done, and that information, often archived, may be helpful.

While there are many proposed options for addressing pressing issues, there are also differences among and between approaches. We cannot afford to disregard existing initiatives, especially those that are already working well. There are compelling reasons to build on existing initiatives, rather than proceed as if positive collaborations do not exist. For more information regarding effective collaborations, please see documents submitted by Gary Mala, Executive Director of EastConn.

SB 874, SB 457, SB 738 and HB 7150 all focus on related issues. There is some overlap among and between these proposals; there is also the potential to create a system, structure/process for facilitating effective change. It is imperative that this process itself be efficient, keeping in view shared positive outcomes.

The Education Committee has the important task of processing input and information from many sources. Thank you for your time and willingness to resolve long-standing concerns.

Submitted by: Ann Gruenberg
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CABE Past President

