

Dear Education Committee,

I am writing to you to strongly oppose Bills S.B. 738, S.B. 457 and S.B. 874. All three bills to various degrees aim to take the control away from the academically successful small districts and to hand it over to the larger districts with much less exemplary records. Putting the fate of small-town schools in the hands of an unelected committee, where small towns will not even have any representation violates every principle of fairness and accountability. The mere fact that smaller districts have overwhelmingly better student achievement than larger districts should be enough proof that bigger is not better.

Combining administrative functions, where overwhelmed employees serve more students than they can handle, creates the exact problems that my children experienced in Stamford and prompted us to relocate to New Canaan. My older son struggled with dyslexia and the school told us “they have bigger problems” and they consider my husband and me capable of “solving our problem ourselves”. Our younger son, after 4 years at the school, came to the attention of the administration as having a suspected learning disability. After 2 months of tests, he turned out to have an IQ score 3 standard deviations above the mean and an above average attention span. How much more can a school fail children, if it gets a gifted and a disabled student confused?

After just 2 months in New Canaan, our younger son once again came to the attention of the administration, this time he was recommended for and qualified to join their gifted program. Our older son also greatly benefitted from New Canaan's rigorous STEM curriculum, which highlighted his strengths and gave him the necessary confidence to tackle his weaknesses. He is graduating this spring with honors, 9 AP classes, 1510 SAT score and having been admitted to highly selective colleges. Our family owes a debt of gratitude to New Canaan schools and we will fight to protect them for the other kids in our community.

Thank you,

Pavla Levin
New Canaan