

TOWN OF CHESHIRE

Cheshire Town Council
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**Testimony on: SB457, SB738 and SB874
Acts considering regionalization of CT. Public School Districts**

**Robert J. Oris, Jr.
Town of Cheshire
Cheshire Town Council Chairman/Mayor
March 1, 2019**

Honorable Members of the Committee:

I am writing to strongly oppose proposed bills SB457, SB738 and SB874 pertaining to Connecticut Public School District regionalization.

Cheshire Public Schools (CPS) is a cornerstone of the Cheshire community in many ways and forced school regionalization will have negative effects on our community. Our Town Council has a significant and legitimate concern that Cheshire would not be provided equal representation and, therefore, would have an unequal voice if folded into another community.

CPS educates our children extremely well. CPS is ranked 29th in Connecticut; our high school is ranked as one of the best 500 public schools nationally and CPS consistently ranks among Connecticut's best in various measures of student success.

CPS is very cost-effective and is considered a strong return on investment (ROI). It ranks 121st out of 166 Connecticut School Districts in money spent per student. There is limited data to support the argument that there would be cost savings in consolidation.

CPS is a large economic driver for the Town of Cheshire. Its success helps to maintain a vibrant real estate environment which in turn insures a strong and sustainable grand list. Local control enables us to prioritize what is in the best interest of our students and our community.



While I applaud any attempt to improve education for all students, there is no evidence supporting regionalization will provide for an enhanced educational experience to a broader base of students or will be more cost-effective. Studies have found that when school districts become too large, they experience diseconomies of scale for many reasons.

Cheshire has a strong history of managing its affairs well. In addition to our great school system, Cheshire stands on a strong financial footing. We are a AAA rated credit and our mill rate remains competitive. Regionalization will remove local control of our schools, negatively impact our economy and ultimately lead to higher taxes, without improving school quality.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit this correspondence.

Robert J. Oris, Jr.
Cheshire Town Council Chairman/Mayor