

Testimony from Katharine Reagan, New Canaan Resident

I wanted to share my voice and strong opposition to forced regionalization of our schools in Connecticut. This regards SB 457, SB738, SB 874.

I have two children in New Canaan Public Schools, West Elementary and Saxe Middle School. A major part of our decision to move to New Canaan was the quality of education in our town. The schools are close, and give voices to the parents/families that have students there. Our Elementary School was just awarded Blue Ribbon Status, only one of two schools in the state.

My concern with regionalization are several:

1. Busing: combining with another school district could cause longer bus routes, which would lead to earlier times out of bed for our Middle/High Schoolers, which is already a consideration in our town.
2. Our schools / class sizes / teachers are extremely well run. Curriculum is strong. Parent involvement is deep. Regionalization only opens the programs up and would give the families in our town less of a voice in school matters, as well as educational decisions for my children.
3. I don't believe that a statewide decision, mandating wholesale regionalization, is best for my town / my community. I believe we have a really good program, strong administration, strong superintendent that believes in efficiency locally.
4. Education is the most important investment we can make in our children.
5. We (and many others) live in New Canaan specifically for the schools. I don't work in New Canaan, and could have paid less for real estate, but public education was extremely important to me. I have a grave concern about the economy in Connecticut as a whole, and also in our town, and neighboring towns. There is a huge quantity of real estate on the market, and I believe forced regionalization will give people less incentive to move to these towns. Ultimately this decision will hurt the economy of our community, and of our state. Connecticut needs people living in communities like New Canaan, and neighboring towns, for tax dollars, and local community investment. Forced regionalization provides less incentive to move to New Canaan which hurts our real estate, and our town's economy.

I feel very strongly that this is the wrong way to go for Connecticut. I am a registered democrat, and will not continue to vote with the Democratic party in our state should decisions, that hurt our overall economy, be made like this one.

Thank you,
Katharine Reagan
New Canaan, CT.