

To the Joint Committee on Education,

As a student in a public school system, I oppose to Senate Bills 738, 457, 874, and all other Senate bills related to the regionalization of schools. It is my strong belief that these proposed bills will negatively affect the quality of education in The State of Connecticut.

My public school system is small. I have friends who have moved from our small town to bigger ones, and they have said that they are struggling. Going from a small school where there is lots of individual attention and differentiation to meet student needs, along with strong teacher-student bonds, to a school where there are two thousand kids and little to no individual attention or differentiation is very challenging. On top of that, schools with larger numbers are seeing more and more drug abuse and students who fall through the cracks. When enrollment numbers multiply, teachers lose the ability to prepare our students for life outside of school while meeting the needs of every child in their class.

While all of these things are important, perhaps the most alarming part of these bills is the fact that many valuable paraprofessionals, teachers, principals, central office workers, and superintendents will lose their jobs. The University of Connecticut has found that there is no correlation between the proficiency of schools and academic performance. Each of the people mentioned before play an extremely crucial part in any school system, and without any of them students would not be receiving a high quality education that Connecticut has a remarkable reputation for. Even the slightest change in staffing can facilitate devastating insufficiencies. I know that especially for me, my teachers have been some of the most influential people in my life, and they have ignited a passion for learning within me. They are the reason why going to school is so enjoyable, and why I as well as everyone else around me want to keep learning post high school and college. Every single educator as well as Superintendent has something unique to offer the children of this state, and they will not be able to continue to do so if regionalization is put into effect.

Even if this plan does go through there is no telling that consolidation bills will even save money. When other schools in New England have regionalized, many lawsuits arised. There is no concrete evidence to support that consolidating school systems actually saves money. In fact the money school systems would save is said to be vastly overestimated. In a perfect world, the proposed bills would work. However, because there is no explicit proof of the effectiveness of regionalization, there is no reason to change the Connecticut education system based on a theoretical bill.

I urge you to oppose to Senate Bills 738, 457, 874, and all other Senate bills related to the regionalization of schools, as the bills will be detrimental to the quality of education in State of Connecticut.

Respectfully,

Julia Thies