

To: Education Committee of the CT State Legislature

Date: February 28, 2019

Subject: SB 738, SB 457, SB 874

All seven (7) members of Trumbull Board of Education are in unanimous agreement with the following statement issued on February 25, 2019 by First Selectman Vicki Tesoro concerning three (3) bills dealing with regionalization of schools in CT:

- SB 738: SB 738 would consolidate school districts in towns with populations of fewer than 40,000.
- SB 457: SB 457 would require any school district with a student population of fewer than 2,000 students to join a new or an existing regional school district.
- SB 874: SB 874 calls for the appointment of a Commission of Shared School Services, which will have until December 2020 to come forward with a recommendation after studying all the school districts in the state.

"I have reviewed the three Bills concerning regionalization of schools in Connecticut and, as First Selectman of Trumbull, I am troubled by the concept of "forced" regionalization. While the concept may have some benefit in the areas of purchasing and energy, it makes little sense to compel districts to give up their autonomy in the areas of education that impact instruction and curriculum.

In Trumbull, our school system is critical to our identity as a community. Our investment in education is one that our community embraces and the success of our students is a matter of civic pride. Our strong school system supports our property values and attracts new residents to our community, bringing to us a steady stream of new ideas and energy.

While our community has divergent points of view on some issues, we are united in our desire to preserve our right to create the school system that suits the needs of our community. The success of our school system speaks for itself. Please do not fix something that is not broken.

We believe the better course of action is encouraging communities to voluntarily join forces to control costs in non-instructional areas. There already exist regional schools in Connecticut and those were accomplished without forcing those communities to do so.

We recognize that our state is in trouble and we are prepared to do our fair share; however, this concept of forced regionalization is not the answer.

This issue should be fully studied and vetted so everyone knows what regionalization means to their community including the financial, instructional, and decision making impacts."

As board members, we work hard to fulfill our obligations to not only provide the tools needed for our students, teachers and administrators to succeed, but also to do so in a fiscally responsible manner. We start our budgeting process in November each year, hold multiple meetings and scrutinize all expenditures to ensure that we are providing the highest quality educational services

in the most cost-effective manner. Despite the fact that we are volunteers, each of us brings our respective professional expertise to our Board endeavors. As a result, Trumbull's schools are strong, vibrant and beloved by all concerned.

We believe that regionalization for Trumbull is void of any objectives that could improve or even sustain any social/emotional or academic outcomes that we embrace as priorities. The increase in size and scope of a regionalized district would dilute any focused goals that are specific to the values of Trumbull. Our parents have decided to live in Trumbull because our school district is tightly aligned to the needs and expectations for the development of their children. The proposed legislation threatens to undermine each community's interest in achieving that which we have worked hard to achieve: building a district that best serves the interest of our students and our community.

Connecticut's very fabric is defined by the unique qualities of each town, and the culture we have established in our town is paramount to our success. We resolve to maintain our uniqueness, sustain our successful schools and promote our commitment to our residents.

Regards,

Members of the Trumbull Board of Education:

Loretta Chory, Chairman
Lucinda Timpanelli, Vice Chairman
Jackie Norcel, Secretary
Jeff Donofrio
Dr. Kathleen Fearon
Marie Petitti
Mike Ward

cc: *Representative Laura Deolin*
Representative David Rutigliano
Representative Ben McGorty
Senator Marilyn Moore
Trumbull Superintendent Gary Cialfi
Trumbull First Selectman Vicki Tesoro