governor.lamont@ct.gov

looney@senatedems.ct.gov

bob.duff@cga.ct.gov

Alex.Bergstein@cga.ct.gov

Will.Haskell@cga.ct.gov

Lucy.Dathan@cga.ct.gov

Education Committee Members

Bill.Simanski@housegop.ct.gov

Bobby.Gibson@cga.ct.gov

Bobby.Sanchez@cga.ct.gov

Brandon.McGee@cga.ct.gov

Cara.Pavalock-DAmato@housegop.ct.gov

Douglas.McCrory@cga.ct.gov

Eric.Berthel@cga.ct.gov

Gail.Lavielle@housegop.ct.gov

Gennaro.Bizzarro@cga.ct.gov

Henry.Genga@cga.ct.gov

Irene.Haines@housegop.ct.gov

Jeff.Currey@cga.ct.gov

Jesse.MacLachlan@housegop.ct.gov

Jill.Barry@cga.ct.gov

Jillian.Gilchrest@cga.ct.gov

Juan.Candelaria@cga.ct.gov

Julie.Kushner@cga.ct.gov

Kate.Rotella@cga.ct.gov

Kathleen.McCarty@housegop.ct.gov

Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov

Laura.Devlin@housegop.ct.gov

Leslee.Hill@housegop.ct.gov

Liz.Linehan@cga.ct.gov

Mae.Flexer@cga.ct.gov

Mary.Abrams@cga.ct.gov

Matt.Blumenthal@cga.ct.gov

Matthew.Lesser@cga.ct.gov

Michelle.Cook@cga.ct.gov

Mitch.Bolinsky@housegop.ct.gov

Noreen.Kokoruda@housegop.ct.gov

Patricia.Miller@cga.ct.gov

Robin.Comey@cga.ct.gov

Roland.Lemar@cga.ct.gov

Ron.Napoli@cga.ct.gov

Susan.Johnson@cga.ct.gov

Vincent.Candelora@housegop.ct.gov

Winfield@senatedems.ct.gov

Planning and Development Committee Members

Cristin.McCarthyVahey@cga.ct.gov

Steve.Cassano@cga.ct.gov

Dan.Champagne@cga.ct.gov

Tami.Zawistowski@housegop.ct.gov

Andre.Baker@cga.ct.gov

Dennis.bradley@cga.ct.gov

Christine.Conley@cga.ct.gov

Jason.Rojas@cga.ct.gov

John.Fonfara@cga.ct.gov

Doug.Dubitsky@housegop.ct.gov

Mike.France@housegop.ct.gov

Steven.Stafstrom@cga.ct.gov

Devin.Carney@housegop.ct.gov

Christine.cohen@cga.ct.gov

Michael.DAgostino@cga.ct.gov

Tom.Arnone@cga.ct.gov

Irene.Haines@housegop.ct.gov

David.Michel@cga.ct.gov

Heather.Somers@cga.ct.gov

Tom.Delnicki@housegop.ct.gov

Joshua.Hall@cga.ct.gov

Noreen.Kokoruda@housegop.ct.gov

Kenneth.Gucker@cga.ct.gov

Honorable Governor Lamont, Sen Looney, Duff, Haskell, Bergstein & Rep Dathan, Education Committee Members and Planning and Development Committee Members:

I am writing opposing any and all proposed bills on forced or coerced school consolidation, and regionalization. I oppose any bills that take will ultimately take away local control of education and regionalize education.

**Why is SB 874 still dangerous and unacceptable?**

* The Governor's budget specifically mentioned school consolidation and regionalization. The Governor's intention and that of many of the committee Democrats has not changed, **only the suggested bill language is more vague**.
* The Legislature is **not required to vote on any and all recommendations** that are developed by the Commission.
* In Section 1(f) **The commission will exist for eight years until June 30, 2027. The looming protracted uncertainty is very detrimental to our local economy**.
* Section 1(b) The Commission consists of**15 of the 17 members appointed by the Democrat Leaders of the Legislature and the Governor**who were the ones that submitted consolidation and regionalization bills in the first place. There is little doubt as to their thoughts on the matter. Parents and citizens alike do not have a voice in the formation of the Commission. Only one member is required to be a parent of a student enrolled in a public school. Therefore, the views of parents will not be adequately represented in this composition.
* Section 2(b) The non-elected commission will be **collecting detailed data on school districts** including: # of schools, tiers of bussing, travel times, school capacity and enrollment in every district, early education, SPED, after school activities and travel time for that bussing, labor contracts, etc. Why is this info not being collected from the largest cities in CT? Why are they excluded from review?
* In Section 2(b) The **use of the word "collaborations" is vague on its intended meaning and can change over time.** "Additional collaboration" is substituted for shared services 2(b)(4); for redistricting 2(b)(8); for school choice 2(b)(10). By 2/1/20 the commission will create preliminary recommendations concerning "additional collaborations" among school districts and municipalities. - **with an 8-year commission, after a few years, will collaboration be viewed as "redistricting and consolidation?"**
* Section 2(b)(14) the bill does not say whether the incentives, grants or tax changes will be forced/coerced or voluntary. **Will "collaboration" be forced or voluntary?**
* Section 2(b)(13&15) the bill **does not specifically indicate what threshold will be used** to determine which districts will be considered for collaboration and school building usage: under 2,000 students? Under 40,000 residents? This again creates a great deal of **uncertainty**.
* Section 2(c) Refers to a**public hearing**, but there is no mention that the findings of this commission are **not subject to a vote by the legislature**. Why not? Section 2(e) says that **“reports and plans developed…shall be submitted to… the General Assembly”** but again the decisions of this powerful commission are **not subject to a vote**by the legislature. Why not?
* Sec 3 says "**cooperative and additional collaborative"**, if these words mean two different things, can one presume that additional collaborative is on a non-cooperative basis, and forced/coerced with the use of incentives. What are the specific incentives?
* Section (4)(b)(1) No later than 1/1/2020, each municipality "in consultation with the commission" develop a report on**shared and consolidated services "including but is not limited to" administrative functions**. **The non-elected commission has a great deal of latitude in its decision making on future consolidation and regionalization.**

The final language of the bill remains to be seen, but within a few years, municipal control of ALL schools in the state could be a thing of the past. Another recent bill called for the creation of regional school taxing districts, which would be the financial structure to allow for mass regionalization throughout CT and will divert tax revenues from more affluent suburbs to neighboring city schools.

Rather than “breaking” what is working well (CT is ranked #5 in Education), why not institute a study of failing schools? Shouldn’t the goal here be to improve outcomes rather than just an equalization of all students?  Why do some of the companion bills in the House and Senate on collaboration explicitly exclude looking at the very districts (the cities of Hartford, Stamford, Bridgeport, New Haven and Waterbury) that are underperforming? These are the very school districts which are represented by the Democrat Leadership that has proposed all these consolidation bills in the first place, and/or are represented by many of the Democrat members of the Planning and Development Committee and the Education Committee. Not setting up a commission to evaluate the issues within these underperforming school districts defies logic and speaks volumes. These bills have all been focused on consolidation, when in fact there are a number of studies which indicate that de-consolidation of education results in a reduction of costs and an improvement in educational outcomes. Why is the state leadership not looking into the benefits of deconsolidation?

KILL ALL SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION BILLS. Focus on fixing what is broken instead.

Sincerely,

Name

Town, CT