



THE FACTS ON SCHOOL DISTRICT REGIONALIZATION

What is School District Regionalization?

District regionalization is when districts join forces to share district administrative functions.ⁱ

Those functions are non-instructional services such as IT, HR, finance, after school services, and procurement.

What Does School District Regionalization Look Like?

- It could mean **2 or 3 small districts join forces to share services and cooperate**. It does not mean that a bigger district swallows up a smaller district.
- As an example, one administrative office building might handle HR and finance for 3 local boards of education.
- **District regionalization is different from school consolidation**, which is the merging of two or more schools.

What are the Benefits of School District Regionalization?

- **Programming:** When small districts regionalize, they can improve students' access to comprehensive educational programming.ⁱⁱ That can include programming like Advanced Placement courses, electives like arts and music education, and athletics programs.
- **Better Negotiating Power:** Regional school districts can use economies of scale to their advantage when negotiating with vendors.
- **Efficiency and Competitiveness:** Connecticut taxpayers want education dollars to be spent efficiently for maximum benefit to students. Research shows that the ideal efficiency size for Connecticut districts - resulting in the most competitive academic outcomes - is around 2,800 students.ⁱⁱⁱ

Connecticut Districts - By the Numbers:

- Connecticut has 166 local and regional school districts, and of that total number of districts 84, **approximately 50%, have less than 2,000 students enrolled.**^{iv}
- The student population in Connecticut had **decreased by 7%** over the last 10 years. With an enrollment of over 500,000 students, this means we have **lost over 35,000 students** in the last decade.^v

What Are We NOT Talking About?

- **NO proposal before the legislature talks about: Reducing local control over school decision-making.** All the current regional school districts in CT have a board of education with local elected representatives and also have local boards of education.
- **NO proposal before the legislature talks about: Busing students long distances, on new routes, or out of town.** However, we are talking about the possibility of unified school transportation contracts that can save multiple municipalities money.
- **NO proposal before the legislature talks about: Closing neighborhood schools.** No proposal suggests closing or downsizing individual schools.
- **NO proposal before the legislature talks about: Abandoning newly built or renovated schools, or building large scale new regional schools.**

Sources

ⁱ Specifically, school district regionalization is the combination of two or more previously independent school districts joining forces to form one new and larger school district, resulting in a single district oversight board and administration.

ⁱⁱ See also, Baker & Geller, W.I. (2015). *When is Small Too Small? Efficiency, Equity and the Organization of Vermont Public Schools*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, Department of Educational Theory, Policy & Administration. (Finding that regional high schools in Connecticut academically outperform their community high school counterparts).

ⁱⁱⁱ Controlling for District Reference Groups (DRGs), an analysis published in 2010 found the ideal district size for output efficiency in Connecticut was 2,789 students and the ideal district size for input efficiency was 2,782. Outputs were defined as differences in performance, relative to average performance, in SAT and Connecticut Mastery Test scores, and district size. Inputs were defined as teachers, administrators, and computers per 100 students. (Heffley, D., & Bekaroglu, C. (2010). *Getting More From Less: Measuring Efficiency in Connecticut High School Districts*. Retrieved February 2019 at https://www.academia.edu/15280776/Getting_More_From_Less?ends_sutd_reg_path=true).

^{iv} Connecticut State Department of Education. (n.d.). EdSight: Public School Enrollment. Retrieved February 2019 at <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>.

^v Ibid.

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About Education Reform Now CT

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Together, we advance ideas and practices based on progressive values--with a goal of increasing equity, protecting civil rights and the social safety net, and promoting great educational opportunities for all--as part of realizing the American Dream.