

Community Should Decide

To the Editor:

Our schools ask parents to sign permission forms for reasons like participation in the "Swish and Spit" program, field trips, displaying a child's photo, utilizing computers, even to be listed in the school directory.

Typically, three weeks is given for parents' response. Most consent willingly, wanting what's best for their children and knowing that school administrators want that, too.

A three-day notice went to the public prior to Region 14's October 16 BOE vote putting reconfiguration in place. Prior to that, area parents knew virtually nothing about it. Nor, in terms of substance, did the board members, for no concrete "planning" data was offered.

Thus was the decision to transport our children over our 60-square-mile region hastily and summarily made with absolutely no request for citizen input or parental consent.

Note: The 1968 document that serves as historic, legal basis for formation of Region 14 states: "That grades kindergarten through twelve be divided into elementary schools (grades K-5), a middle school (grades 6-8), and a high school (grades 9-12)" [and] "That grades K-5 be housed in elementary school buildings in Bethlehem and Woodbury."

The Connecticut Supreme Court has ruled that regionalization plans consist of recommendations found in this final document and that any fundamental change requires a referendum by the two communities.

No ambiguity exists. The recommendations are worded in plain English. Changing grade configurations and leaving one town with no school for kids grades K through 2 is as fundamental as it gets. The BOE has violated your right to grant permission for this action.

Region 14 voters: Please go to www.saveregion14elementary.com to let your voice be heard. Add your name to the growing list of residents asking that their right to a regional referendum be honored so the community, as a whole, may decide.

Jim Conway

Woodbury