

Miller Place Union Free School District

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November 13, 2024

Sent via fax (518) 486-2405, email RegentsOffice@nysed.gov

US Postal Service (CM:RR)

Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr.

NYS Education Department

89 Washington Avenue

Board of Regents, Room 110 EB

Albany, NY 12234

Dear Chancellor Young and members of the New York State Board of Regents,

On behalf of the Miller Place School District's Board of Education, we are writing to express our deep concerns and strong opposition to NYSED's proposed regionalization plan. While we understand the intent to explore strategies that promote equitable access to high-quality education for all students across New York State, a broad, one-size-fits-all regionalization policy may present challenges that could undermine the identity and effectiveness of our local schools and the community we serve.

We feel regionalization threatens to diminish our autonomy and Miller Place prides itself on its ability to tailor programs and services to meet the unique needs of our students. Decisions made at the regional level, without incorporating the insights and priorities of our district, risk not reflecting our community's specific values. As a locally elected Board, we are deeply connected to the residents we serve, allowing us to be responsive and adaptive in ways that a regional structure may struggle to replicate.

Miller Place is already working diligently to balance the needs of our students with fiscal responsibility. Regionalization could lead to a loss of local control over budgetary decisions, potentially resulting in higher taxes for our community without any clear improvement in services or outcomes. Such financial uncertainties are concerning, particularly when there is no explicit assurance that regionalization would benefit our students.

Our district has a strong tradition of community involvement, where students, parents, and staff collaborate to foster an inclusive and supportive school culture. By broadening governance beyond our community, regionalization could erode the unique sense of identity and connection to our students and families in Miller Place. We believe this shift could adversely impact student engagement, parental involvement, and school culture—factors crucial to student success.

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Miller Place is committed to supporting innovative strategies that foster educational excellence and equity across the state. However, we firmly believe these goals can be pursued without compromising the unique strengths and autonomy of local school districts. Local boards are closely connected to their communities, enabling us to make decisions that are most beneficial for our students and families.

Therefore, we respectfully request that the Board of Regents reconsider any proposals advancing regionalization. We remain open to collaborating on policies that benefit all students while preserving the integrity, identity, and character of school districts like ours.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to working together to achieve solutions that honor the unique values and strengths of districts such as Miller Place.

Sincerely,

Lisa Reitan

Lisa Reitan
President, Board of Education

Bryan Makarius

Bryan Makarius
Vice President, Board of Education

Johanna Testa

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