



Chappaqua Central School District

Christine Ackerman, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

November 20, 2024

Dr. Betty A. Rosa
Commissioner of Education
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

RE: Concerns Regarding NYSED Regionalization Efforts

Dear Commissioner Rosa:

I am writing to express concerns regarding the New York State Education Department's regionalization efforts. While this initiative offers an opportunity to enhance educational outcomes and achieve cost savings through shared services among school districts, the current regulations, as presented, raise significant questions, particularly regarding local control.

To preserve the integrity of local governance, **I respectfully request the codification of clear language in the regulations to ensure that participation in regionalization efforts remains entirely voluntary.** While I understand this assurance is noted on your website, and has been stated, it is not explicitly included in the regulatory language. Stating this principle in the regulations would safeguard the autonomy of local Boards of Education, enabling them to make decisions that best serve their unique communities.

I am concerned that, as written and presented, there is a potential risk of inequitable resource distribution without local agreement. I also believe districts that initially agree to a shared services model should have the flexibility to make adjustments after implementation, especially in response to unanticipated outcomes. This process should not require consent from a BOCES Superintendent or the State Education Department, provided that cancellation agreements are reasonable and clearly defined.

By striking a balance between collaboration and local autonomy, New York State can create an educational system that addresses the diverse needs of its students while respecting the authority of local Boards of Education. I ask the Education Department to affirm its commitment to these principles by clearly asserting voluntary participation in regionalization initiatives in its regulatory language, and maintaining a clear stance on local control.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CA', followed by a long horizontal line that ends in a small arrowhead.

Christine Ackerman
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education
Regent Fran Wills
PNWBOCES Superintendent Neil Boyle
Senior Deputy Commissioner of Education Jeffrey Matteson