Shared Services:
“We are in this together!"

Jack Zamary,
Superintendent

Bill Hull,
Superintendent

Roy Seitsinger,
Superintendent

Scott Feder,
Superintendent

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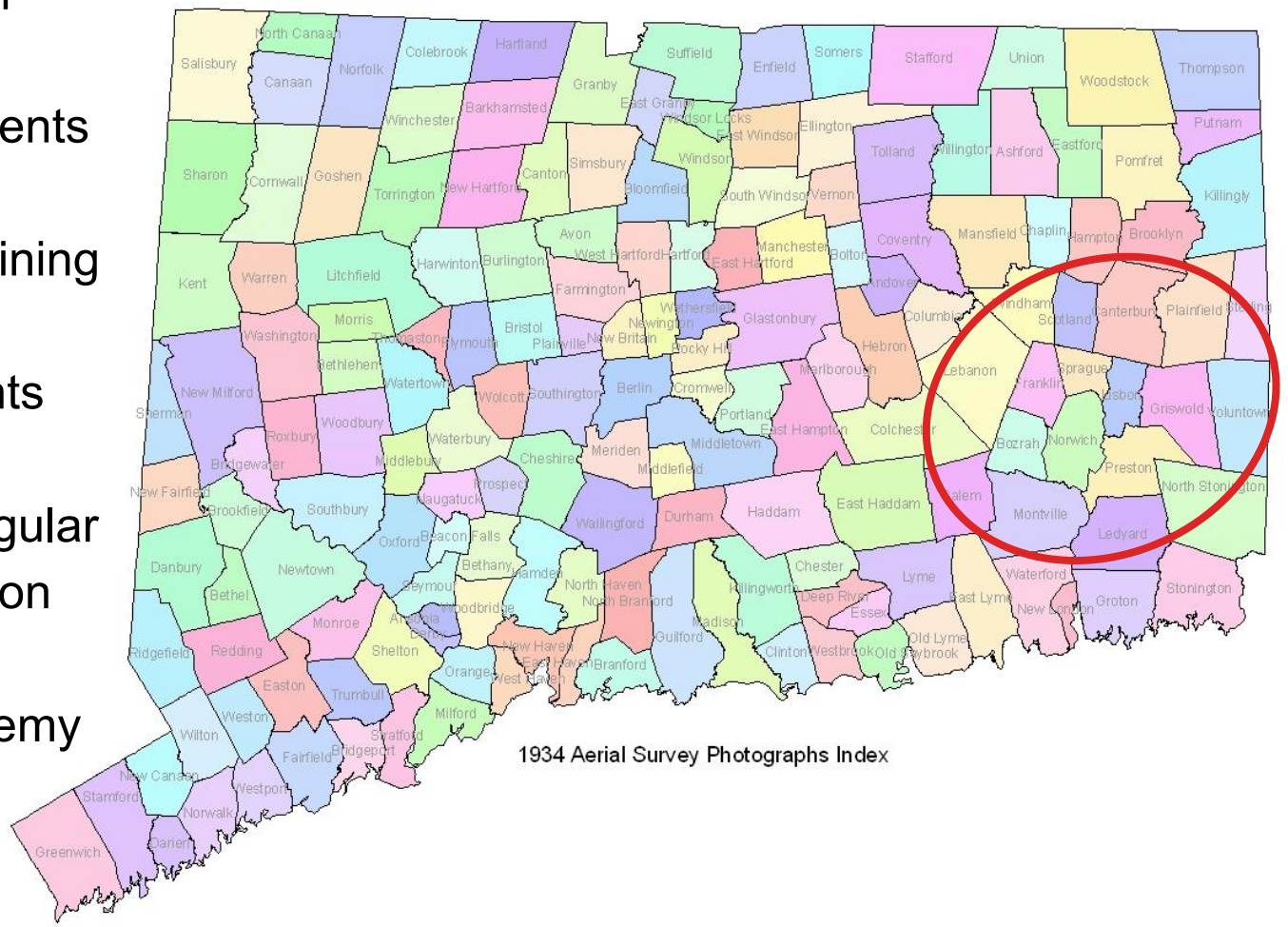
A little bit about us . . . .

- We lead small districts with less than 500 students.
- Most of us are part time superintendents (the smart ones).
- Most of our districts have flat or declining enrollment.
- We have a group of 9 superintendents from small districts in the same geographical area that meet on a regular basis. A primary function is to work on shared services.
- Most of us have Norwich Free Academy as a designated high school.



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Why are shared services important to your district?

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ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How does a district maintain its individual identity, while sharing meaningfully with other districts?
- What are key “felt need markers” that mandate when it’s time to seek out shared service partners?
- What metrics can be applied to assess whether shared models are effective?
- Who needs to be involved with decisions surrounding potential shared services?
- What are the most effective systemic communication structures that tie in with this work?

What does AI say about the needs for shared services?

Fiscal Dependency

CT boards rely on municipal tax bases without independent debt authority.

High Administrative Overhead

Fixed administrative costs absorb resources away from direct classroom instruction.

Declining Enrolment Trends

Smaller student cohorts increase per-pupil operating costs exponentially.



VALUE PROPOSITION

Core Benefits of Interdistrict Collaboration



Economies of Scale

Bulk vendor procurement reduces unit costs.



Programmatic Access

Shared specialized staff expands elective options.



Operational Continuity

Cross-district coverage eliminates single-person bottlenecks.

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What shared services does your district currently have?

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FUNCTIONAL TARGETS

High-Impact Shared Service Domains



Business & HR

Joint payroll processing and benefit pool administration.



IT & Cybersecurity

Shared systems network engineers and threat monitoring.



Specialized Staff

Coordinated speech pathologists and itinerant specialists.



Transportation

Combined regional out-of-district specialized transport routes.

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Our attempts at shared services . .

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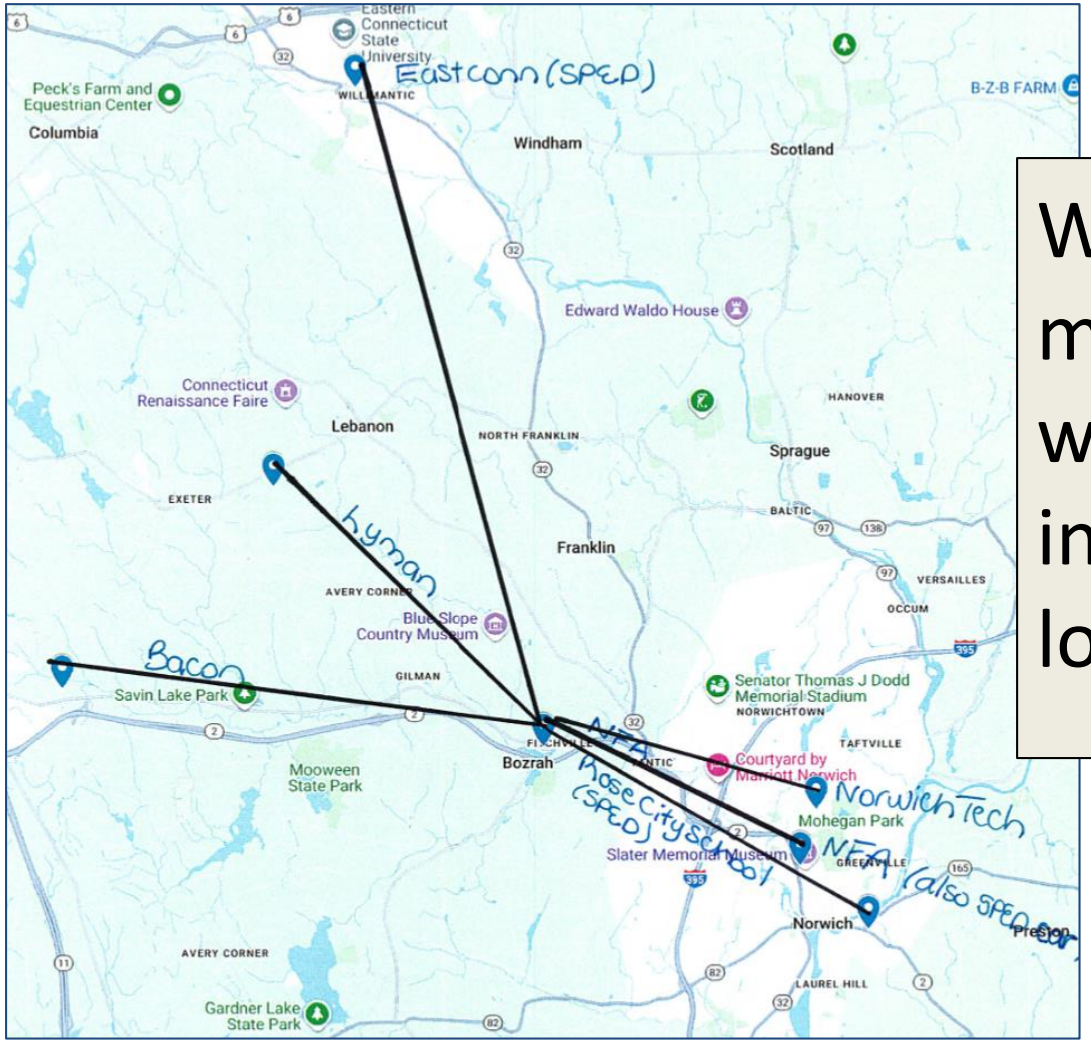
- Shared Transportation:
  - Shared transportation mapping for 9 towns (SPED and Reg)
  - Shared transportation manager (Preston & Voluntown)
- Shared Staffing:
  - Numerous districts - certified and non-certified
- Shared CFO:
  - Sprague, Scotland, Canterbury and Marlborough
  - Preston and others share with their town
- Shared Back Office Including HR:
  - Services through LEARN
- Shared Designated High Schools:
  - Shared PD
  - Shared Curriculum
- Shared IT Services:
  - Attempted last year and discussions continue.

An example of our transportation shared routes . . .



We also developed a master spreadsheet with all of our bus runs including, times, locations and vendors.

GOVERNANCE & LAW

Connecticut Legal & Structural Pathways

CGS § 10-158A AGREEMENTS

Interdistrict Cooperative Agreements

- **Bilateral MOUs:** Direct board-to-board contracts.
- **Local Control:** Retains district board identity.
- **Flexible Terms:** Annual renewal or long-term options.

REGIONAL SERVICE CENTERS

RESC Infrastructure

- **Established Agencies:** CREC, LEARN, EASTCONN, CES, etc.
- **Turnkey Programs:** Pre-built legal and fiscal infrastructure.
- **State Alignment:** Direct CSDE grant coordination.

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What challenges have you experienced with shared services?

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RISK ANALYSIS

Potential Pitfalls and Implementation Friction



Autonomy Fears

Perception of losing local community identity.



Inequitable Cost Sharing

Disagreements over student-count vs flat-fee funding.



Culture Clash

Mismatched administrative procedures and software tools.

ROADMAP

Four-Phase Implementation Framework

PHASE 01

Needs Audit

Identify service gaps and redundant expenditures across partner towns.

PHASE 02

MOU Drafting

Establish transparent cost allocation formulas and exit mechanisms.

PHASE 03

Pilot Rollout

Launch targeted pilot in single non-instructional domain.

PHASE 04

Scaling

Review metrics annually and expand into high-value domains.

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STRATEGIC MITIGATION

De-Risking Joint Agreements



Equal Board Representation

Joint oversight committees give equal voting voice regardless of district size.

Transparent Formula Scaling

Hybrid cost models combine baseline fee with pro-rata usage metrics.

Clear Exit Provisions

One-year advance written notice protocols maintain stability.

Have you or your district developed shared service MOUs or other agreements? If you have, what have you learned?



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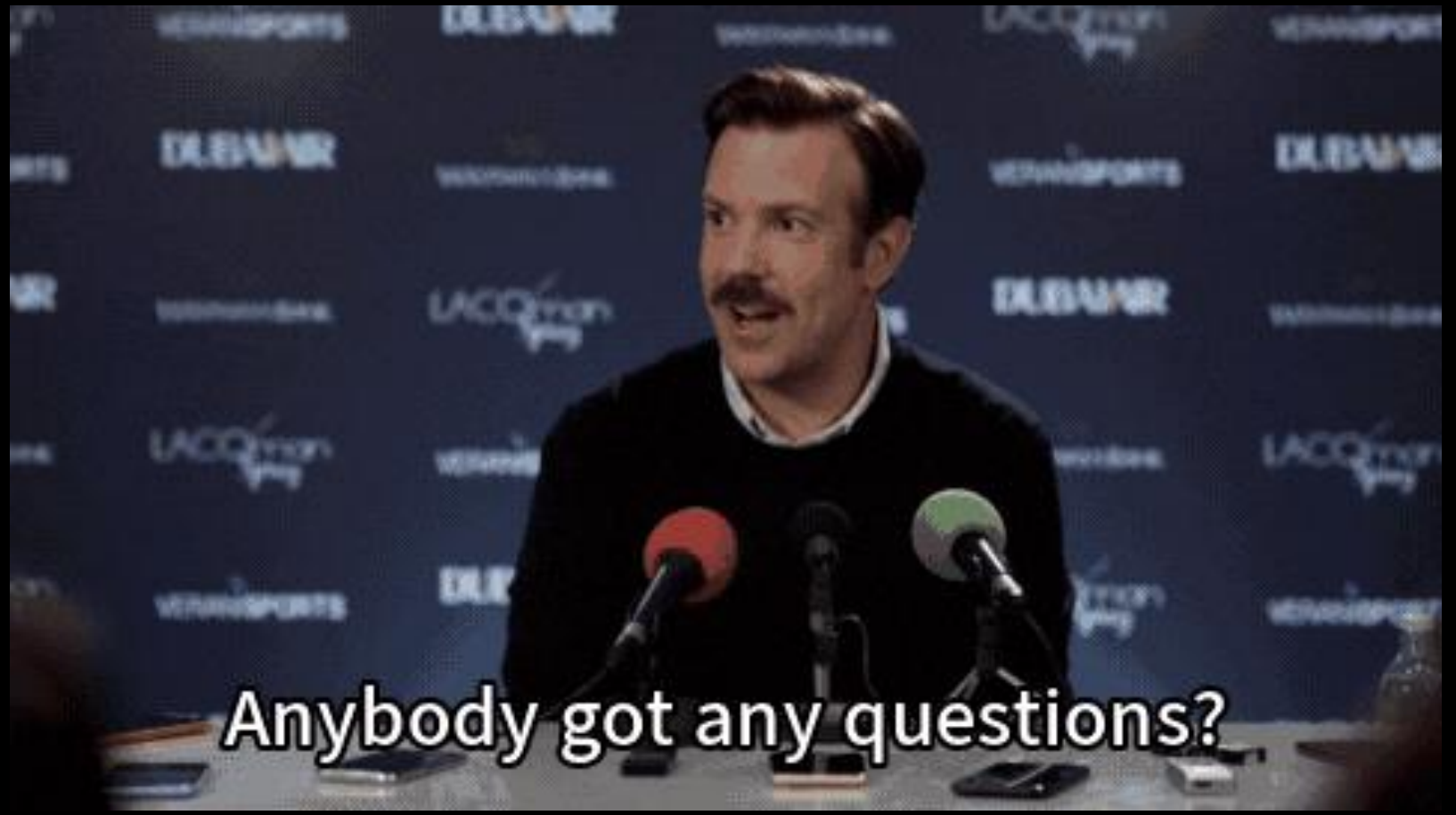
What legislation should propose and/or support to promote shared services?


Anybody got any questions?

Thank you!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