
Reconfiguration Doesn't Work for Families

To the Editor:

The Region 14 Board of Education's decision to reconfigure the elementary schools continues to boggle the mind. Families with young children cannot make this work.

At a special hearing to answer the community's questions for the first time since October, a hearing called by a 180-signature petition which forced this type of format, the administration admitted to these following key points:

Bethlehem Primary School will start at 8:20 a.m., necessitating 7:15 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. bus pick up times for 5, 6, and 7 year-olds.

They intend to shorten the days of both the middle school and high school by up to 25 minutes in order to make the busing scheme work. The promise of all-day kindergarten will simply be a lottery where 18-20 students will be picked out of roughly 140, to attend all day. This creates a whole new inequity at the kindergarten level.

The fifth grade inequity was originally touted as one of the key reasons for reconfiguration. How does this differ?

The septic system at BES is currently at capacity. Can it handle the load of 100 extra students? The administration does not know, and it is unclear whether they have contacted Torrington Area Health District regarding this issue.

The increased costs for busing are currently a complete guess, and all they have are estimates.

Will we have to replace the septic system at Bethlehem? How much will the initial renovations being done by the maintenance staff actually cost? What are the unknown costs for reconfiguration? How is this plan educationally sound and fiscally responsible?

How can a superintendent and eight members of a Board impose such a burden on families and taxpayers in the region and continue to ignore their pleas to reconsider that decision?

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