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I have lived in Calais since 1967, taught for 20 years in the district and was my school's NEA rep at negotiations. I was active in the formation of U-32 district and all the history regarding the district's on-again off-again relationship with Montpelier during the late 60's early 70's.

Another attempt at joining the two districts a few years ago illustrates pretty clearly that enlarging school districts is all about losing local control.

The U-32 Board and Montpelier Boards had some some formal conversations about jointly occupying the old St Michaels HS on Barre Street. That seemed to a group of local watch-dogs that it was not going to be a relationship that financially favored U-32 at all and appeared to be the proverbially camels' nose under the tent for combining the school districts.

When the proposal passed people from the five towns presented clarifying information to our fellow towns people and then collected enough signatures for a re-vote. The issue was voted down rather soundly.

The point is that U-32 district was not too large to inform the voters and collect signatures to reconsider the proposal. Any requirement that towns and unified districts be part of huge consolidated districts will pretty much disenfranchise small towns; the ability for board members of the smaller towns to protect the interests of the small towns will disappear.

I'm afraid that time spent rearranging your legos to create such consolidated districts and convincing people to go along with those creations will take our focus off the more important issue of the property tax dilemma.

In all the years we have lived here I have seen administrative salaries increase at a far faster rate than teacher and para-professional salaries ; I have also seen the ratio of pupils to administrators shrink more and more.

I have some thoughts about 'streamlining' education in a consolidation. I'm afraid we will have cookie cutter education with no room for creative teaching.

All we really know about education is that we don't really know.