



Doug Reycraft

Chair, Community Schools Alliance

399 Ridout Street North, London, Ontario N6A 2P1

519-287-2015

reycraft@sympatico.ca

www.communityschoolsalliance.ca

Thursday, October 5, 2009

RE: MPP Letter in Support of a "Smart Moratorium" on School Closures

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Community Schools Alliance, I am writing to encourage you to write to your MPP in support of a "Smart Moratorium" on school closures.

The goal of the "smart moratorium" is to provide time for the Ministry, school boards and municipalities to work together to develop policies addressing issues such as planning for declining enrolments, a mutually agreed upon Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) process, a review of funding to rural and small community schools and establishing a working relationship between municipalities and school boards that is transparent and accountable.

During the AMO Conference, a standing room only crowd of over 200 Community Schools Alliance Inaugural Meeting attendees sent a strong message to Minister Wynne that we believe our community schools are vital pieces of our public infrastructure that we can not afford to lose. For many in the room, the inaugural meeting provided the opportunity to voice their frustration with the accommodation review process and to discuss the impact that this flawed process will have on their community.

We took our request for a "smart moratorium" directly to Education Minister Wynne during a recent meeting. In response to our request, the Minister provided us with a draft policy entitled "Encouraging Facility Partnerships". While this policy is a first step in addressing some of our concerns, it only begins to address our collective goal of protecting our vital public infrastructure.

Therefore, we need to take further action to convince the Minister and her colleagues that a "smart moratorium" on disputed school closures is required immediately. To assist us in this effort, I encourage you and your municipality to review the attached draft letter to your MPP and to create your own letter in support of a "smart moratorium".

I thank you for your attention to this request and if you would like to learn more about the Community Schools Alliance please visit our website at www.communityschoolsalliance.ca.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Reycraft".

Doug Reycraft
Chair, Community Schools Alliance

-DRAFT-

RE: Support of A "Smart Moratorium"

Dear MPP,

I am writing to request your support of a "smart moratorium" for disputed school closures.

Earlier this year, the Community Schools Alliance was formed by municipal leaders from across this province who were frustrated by the negative impact that school closures were having on their community's socio-economic fabric and the lack of meaningful consultation for these decisions. In response to this issue, the Community Schools Alliance united municipalities across Ontario behind the common cause of obtaining a "smart moratorium" on disputed school closures.

The goal of the "smart moratorium" is to provide time for the Ministry, school boards and municipalities to work together to develop policies addressing issues such as planning for declining enrolments, a mutually agreed upon Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) process, a review of funding to rural and small community schools and establishing a working relationship between municipalities and school boards that provides transparency and accountability.

The members of the Community Schools Alliance know that the current system for determining which schools stay open and which schools are closed is a flawed process and school boards are closing schools, amalgamating schools, transporting students out of their community, and building new schools without reviewing the impact of these decisions on our communities. As a result, municipalities across Ontario have become frustrated by the ARC process and the impact these decisions are having on sustainable municipal growth and municipal planning.

I encourage you to stand with the parents, students and municipal leaders from across this province that support a "smart moratorium" for disputed school closures. Please encourage Minister Wynne and your party leader to learn more about the goals of the CSA and to support a "smart moratorium" before we lose more of our vital public education infrastructure in Ontario.

Should you have any questions or require more information, please contact me at *phone or email here*.

A formal reply would be gratefully appreciated.

Yours truly,

Cc: Premier Dalton McGuinty (fax 416-325-3745)
Hon. Kathleen Wynne (fax 416-325-2608)
Tim Hudak, MPP (fax 416-325-0998)
Andrea Horwath, MPP (fax 416-325-2770)
Community Schools Alliance (fax 519-434-0638)