



Inaugural Meeting

August 17th, 2009

4:45PM-5:30PM

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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Community Schools Alliance Presentation
 - Discussion
- Confirmation of the Community Schools Alliance Executive Committee
- Adjournment



Founding Executive Committee

- Doug Reycraft, Mayor, Southwest Middlesex
- Gary Burroughs, Lord Mayor, Niagara-on-the-Lake
- John R. Wilson, Mayor, Malahide Township
- Jim Collard, Councillor, Niagara-on-the Lake
- Tony Guergis, Warden, Simcoe County
- Doug Shearer, Councillor, Cobalt
- Michael Power, Mayor, Greenstone
- Ron Emond, Warden, Hastings County
- Allen Taylor, Chair of ROMA



How We Got To This Point

- Changes in Governance ('98) - DSBs
 - Reorganization led to less local accountability
 - Fewer trustees – larger area
 - the system is less accountable
 - Biased towards larger schools (400 + elem., 900+ sec.)
- Funding Formula
 - Per pupil funding
 - Foundation grant and top-up funding for rural schools spent at board's discretion
- Declining Enrolment
 - Declined over the past five years (68,000-3.4%) and will continue over the next five (72,000-3.8%)



The Challenge

- The end result of these three factors is vacant pupil places and school closures
 - There are 100 schools in Ontario currently undergoing accommodation reviews and 146 schools closing or recommended to be closed (People For Education)
- These closures represent:
 - The loss of “community hubs”
 - The loss of valuable public infrastructure
 - Lost opportunity for board-municipality collaboration
 - The end result of an accommodation review process that is fundamentally flawed



The Process Is Flawed

- Concerns of public and municipalities ignored
- Consultation has become a “sham”
- No appeal of board decisions
 - Absolute power
- The real power is in the hands of the administration
 - “Stepford Wife”



Why Was the CSA Formed?

- The Community Schools Alliance was formed this year by a number of Ontario municipalities that are concerned with the flawed process used by school boards in making decisions about student accommodation, especially school closures
- A Founding Executive Committee was developed to move the Alliance forward
 - Meets bi-weekly to advance the goals of the Alliance



CSA Guiding Principles

- Schools are valuable public infrastructure.
- We need a better accommodation review process.
- A “smart moratorium” is required.
- This challenge must be solved by the Minister of Education and not school boards.



We Need A Better System

- The Community Schools Alliance believes that a better system is needed and should:
 - Ensure that school boards and municipal councils work together on decisions regarding education infrastructure,
 - Provide greater accountability for school board decisions on student accommodation, including school closures,
 - Change the governance model for school board decisions on student accommodation which must include the opportunity to appeal those decisions,
 - Respect and value the input of students, parents, the communities and municipalities during the ARC process



Schools Are Public Infrastructure

- We believe that:
 - Schools are valuable pieces of public infrastructure
 - As a result, municipalities should have a voice in the decision making process, not the decision recommending process
 - Schools are community hubs
 - Parents, students and community leaders need to also be meaningfully involved in the decision making process



Why do we need a “smart moratorium”?

- We need a smart moratorium now!
 - Without a smart moratorium we will continue to lose valuable public infrastructure on a daily basis
 - The current accommodation review process is broken and we need to fix it



What is a “Smart Moratorium”?

- A “smart moratorium” provides the time to develop:
 - A working relationship between municipalities and school boards based on transparency and accountability,
 - Policies and planning for declining enrolments,
 - A mutually agreed upon ARC (accommodation review committee) process,
 - Fair funding for rural and small community schools,
 - An opportunity to review the impact of new legislation



Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act (Bill 177)

- The stated goal is to strengthen Ministry Governance of School Boards and emphasize that Boards are responsible for student achievement
 - Sets up an employer/employee type of relationship where ultimately the trustees will be “fired”/replaced by a supervisor in the event of poor job performance
 - Does not respect the fact that trustees are publicly elected officials
- Limited Consultation Period
 - Distributed to select groups
 - Little if any inclusion of parent or Municipal Councils in consultation



Our Bill 177 Concerns

- This Act will encourage boards to move in the direction of factory standardized school models.
 - We need our boards to have the flexibility to work locally with municipalities to create dynamic school community hubs, schools that will achieve the Ministry standards and more.



How You Can Help

- Pass the Community Schools Alliance Resolution
 - Encourage your colleagues to pass the Community Schools Alliance resolution in support of a “smart moratorium”
- Contact your MPP
 - Tell them the importance of a “smart moratorium”
 - Draft MPP letter will be distributed to councillors next week



What Our Critics are Saying

You need to close smaller schools to ensure that our students have access to the programs and services that they need to excel



What Parents Are Saying

“Closing rural schools will destroy the culture of rural communities and must stop. Country life is part of our heritage and removing children from that distances them from who they are and their place within that society. As a parent I would rather my child attended a smaller local school and received a strong basic education in a caring community that knows him and his family than an urban school that has more programming such as additional arts or sports available. Thank you for championing this. I support your campaign.” Dr. Jane Gloor



Nominations

- Nominating Committee Report
 - Regional representation
 - Strong interest in the subject area
- Resolution to support the Nominating Committee's Report



Executive Committee

- Doug Reycraft, Mayor, Southwest Middlesex
- Gary Burroughs, Lord Mayor, Niagara-on-the-Lake
- John R. Wilson, Mayor, Malahide Township
- Jim Collard, Councillor, Niagara-on-the Lake
- Tony Guergis, Warden, Simcoe County
- Doug Shearer, Councillor, Cobalt
- Michael Power, Mayor, Greenstone
- Ron Emond, Warden, Hastings County
- Chris White, Mayor, Guelph-Eramosa



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