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Media Release

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COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ALLIANCE MEETS WITH MINISTER WYNNE

OTTAWA, ONTARIO: During a meeting on Tuesday August 18th, the Community Schools Alliance Executive met with the Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne to discuss the urgent need for a “smart moratorium” for disputed school closures.

The Community Schools Alliance Executive Committee highlighted the flawed process used to determine which schools will be closed and expressed their concern with the valuable public infrastructure that was lost when 16 Ontario schools closed in 2008. This loss could increase substantially with about 146 schools closing or recommended to close in 2009 and another 100 schools currently undergoing accommodation reviews.

In response to the issues raised by the Community Schools Alliance Executive Committee, Minister Wynne discussed her newly drafted policy entitled “Encouraging Facility Partnerships”. The stated goal of the draft policy is to “encourage school boards to work with their community partner in order to maximize opportunities to share facilities”.

Doug Reycraft, Chair of Community Schools Alliance stated, “While the draft policy is an important step forward, it falls short of recognizing the urgency of finding a solution to the current schools crisis.”

At the conclusion of the meeting with the Minister, Mayor John Wilson of Malahide Township stated, “The Minister needs to understand that the current process is flawed beyond repair and we need a better process that ensures municipalities and school boards work together on decisions regarding education infrastructure.”

Mayor Chris White of Guelph/Eramosa Township said, “We made some progress during our meeting with Minister Wynne, but we have a long way to go and we will continue to build the momentum of our Alliance until the Minister implements a “smart moratorium” on disputed school closures in Ontario”.

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.

A copy of the full presentation to Minister Wynne is available at the Community Schools Alliance website at www.communityschoolsalliance.ca.

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