



Community Schools Alliance
399 Ridout St. N.
London, Ontario
N6A 2P1
www.communityschoolsalliance.ca

Media Release

Contact: Doug Reycraft
Phone: (519) 287-2015
Email: reycraft@mdlsx.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
9 A.M. EDT, August 10, 2009

EDUCATION MINISTER WYNNE TO MEET WITH COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE

LONDON, ONTARIO: Education Minister Kathleen Wynne has agreed to meet with the Executive Committee of the Community Schools Alliance during the annual AMO Conference in Ottawa to discuss a “smart moratorium” for disputed school closures in Ontario.

There are 100 schools in Ontario currently undergoing accommodation reviews (ARC) and 146 schools closing or recommended to be closed.

The Community Schools Alliance was formed in 2009 to encourage the Ministry Of Education to work with school boards and municipalities to develop a better system for making decisions about student accommodation in communities across Ontario. In particular, the Alliance wants municipal councils to have a more meaningful role in those decisions. The Alliance is asking that a “smart moratorium” on disputed school closures be imposed while a “better system” is developed.

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In response to the Minister's announcement, Hastings County Warden and Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Ron Emond said, "The Minister's decision to meet with the Executive of the Community Schools Alliance is a strong signal that she understands the importance of maintaining our schools as community hubs and the role that our schools should play in our communities".

Simcoe Warden Tony Guergis, a member of the Community Schools Alliance Executive stated, "I think everyone involved in the educational facility discussion, including the Minister, is aware of the value of school boards and municipalities working together. I am pleased that she is providing the opportunity to discuss how we can improve the collaboration between councils and boards".

Community Schools Alliance Chairman Doug Reycraft said, "We regret that Minister Wynne is unable to attend our inaugural meeting on the 17th of August due to a prior commitment. However, we are looking forward to the opportunity to sit down with the Minister in a different forum on the 18th of August to discuss our "smart moratorium" concept".

The Alliance's "smart moratorium" concept can 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.

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