



## **School Closures Revive Community Schools Alliance**

**For Immediate Release**

**Wednesday, July 30, 2014**

**Southwest Middlesex-** Municipal representatives from across Ontario are joining ranks once again to rally against the continuing closure of schools in small towns and rural areas.

During a recent teleconference hosted by Mayor Gerry Marshall of the Town of Penetanguishene, Mayor Doug Reycraft joined other mayors and councillors in expressing concern and frustration with the continuing trend by school boards to close schools in smaller communities.

Reycraft, chair of the Community Schools Alliance since its founding in 2009, welcomed a request to revive the Alliance to again attempt to change the process followed by school boards to determine which schools are closed and which stay open.

“Over and over again we have seen the opinions of municipal councils ignored by school boards when considering closures,” stated Reycraft. “Our councils, and the parents and children they represent, deserve a larger role in determining where our youth get their education.”

Three major issues were raised during the meeting:

- There is an apparent predetermined nature to the formal review of proposals to close schools resulting in a lack of public trust in the accommodation review process;
- School boards are not being held accountable for ignoring the recommendations of Accommodation Review Committees (ARC's); and,
- Elected officials and councils in small town and rural Ontario who face schools closures in their communities are not being directly consulted by school boards about these closures.

“Our schools are critical parts of the public infrastructure in our communities”, said Reycraft. “Continuing to shut our councils out of decision-making process or to ignore their advice turns that process into a travesty.”

A meeting of municipal representatives is being organized in London in August to elect a fresh steering committee for the revived Community Schools Alliance and create a strategic plan to move forward. A meeting with the Minister of Education in the early fall is being sought.

For more information, please contact  
Mayor Doug Reycraft  
519-287-2015