

CSA gets meeting with Minister of Education Lord Mayor and members of CSA will sit down with Minister at AMO conference in Ottawa

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The Lord Mayor and other members of the Community Schools Alliance will get their meeting with the Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne.

The meeting will happen next week during the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference in Ottawa.

Gary Burroughs and other members of the Community Schools Alliance (CSA) will be asking the minister to put a smart moratorium on disputed school closures in Ontario, including Niagara District Secondary School (NDSS).

Burroughs said the meeting will be partially about NDSS, but mostly about what is happening to schools all across Ontario.

"There are many schools that are facing closure because of declining enrolment," he said. "And there are some schools closing where there's no dispute, but for those schools where there is a disagreement about whether it should be closed, there needs to be an appeal process for the people in the community."

Burroughs said the smart moratorium the CSA is calling for will put a hold on any school closures that are in dispute until something can be worked out where communities and school boards agree.

He also said the smart moratorium isn't a delay tactic.

"It's just putting things on hold until the communities have a better relationship with their school boards," he said. "It's not indefinite, it's only until we work with the government to do what is best for our communities and our children."

Niagara Falls MPP Kim Craitor said the proposal put forward by the CSA has merits to it. "The idea of taking a breather may be the way, a fair way, a better way to do this," he said. "This is the only high school in Niagara-on-the-Lake and that needs to be taken into consideration."

Craitor said he has talked with Wynne about this issue quite a bit, as well as the committee, and is sure that she is well-versed in the issue.

He said the minister is not only meeting with the group, but will be spending a longer than usual time allotment talking with them.

"It's important to ensure that students everywhere in Ontario have the best possible education and programming available to them," Craitor said.

The AMO annual conference will take place in Ottawa Aug. 16-19 and will bring together representatives from municipalities across Ontario. Ministers and other members of public office are expected to be at the conference as well.