Greater Napanee
GREATER FOR MANY REASONS

Community & Corporate Services
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January 9, 2017

The Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education
Queen's Park
14th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

VIA MAIL & EMAIL

Dear Minister Hunter:

Re: Resolution Requesting a Moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process

Please be advised that at the meeting held on December 20, 2016, the Council of the Town of Greater Napanee adopted the following resolution in response to a Deputation from Ms. Norah Brien (see attached):

RESOLUTION #553/16: Isbester & Schenk
WHEREAS the current Accommodation Review Process is not reflective of the reality of rural school and community life;
AND WHEREAS school closures impact single-school small rural communities in all educational, social and economic aspects to a far greater degree than those impacts in multi-school urban communities;
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Greater Napanee requests the Minister of Education initiate an immediate moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process until such time as a review of the above mentioned impacts on small rural communities can be studied, completed and the results and recommendations be considered;
AND THAT this resolution be circulated to Premier Kathleen Wynne, MPP Randy Hillier, Minister of Infrastructure, Limestone District School Board, Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, Community School Alliance, County of Lennox & Addington and all municipalities in Ontario.

As a result of a recorded vote, the resolution was declared.....CARRIED.

Council appreciates your immediate attention to this request.

Yours truly,

Susan M. Beckel

Susan M. Beckel, BBA, Dipl. M.M.,
Clerk

Att. 1

CC:

- The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario, Email: premier@ontario.ca
- Randy Hillier, MPP Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox & Addington, Email: randy.hillierco@pc.ola.org
- The Honourable Bob Chiarelli, Minister of Infrastructure, Email: bchiarelli.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
- Paula Murray, Chair - Limestone District School Board, Email: murrayp@limestone.on.ca
- John Brisbois, Chair - Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, Email: brisbois@alcdsb.on.ca
- Doug Reycraft, Chair - Community Schools Alliance, Email: reycraft@sympatico.ca
- Warden Lowry and Members of County of Lennox & Addington Council, Email: lkeech@lennox-addington.on.ca
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Board, Email: lruder@amo.on.ca
- All Ontario Municipalities
- Norah Brien, Email: norahbrien@gmail.com

Susan Beckel

From: Norah Brien
Sent: November-23-16 11:19 AM
To: Susan Beckel
Subject: Addressing Council

Dear Ms. Beckel

I would like to address the Napanee Town Council regarding the Long Term Accommodation Plan provided to them from the Limestone District School Board.

I would like to ask the Council to formally reject the LTAP and to help the Selby community by sending letters to the Limestone District School Board Trustees, the Director of Education as well as Premier Wynne and Director of Education Mitzie Hunter, stating their objections.

Selby School is not only on the list for closure, but a boundary change that will see over half the school's current population bussed into Prince Charles. Out of all five local schools recommended for closure, Selby has the highest enrollment, has had major repairs done over the last two years and is utilizing every classroom, requirements that do not meet the standard for closure or boundary redefinition set by the Ministry of Education.

If Selby School closes, we will see the loss of a great school and community. This will leave Greater Napanee with only two schools, as the proposal is to build the new school in Stone Mills Township. The LTAP recommendations are not serving the best interests of our children, despite what the LImestone Board says. I am asking Council to please help us save Selby School from closure.

Please,

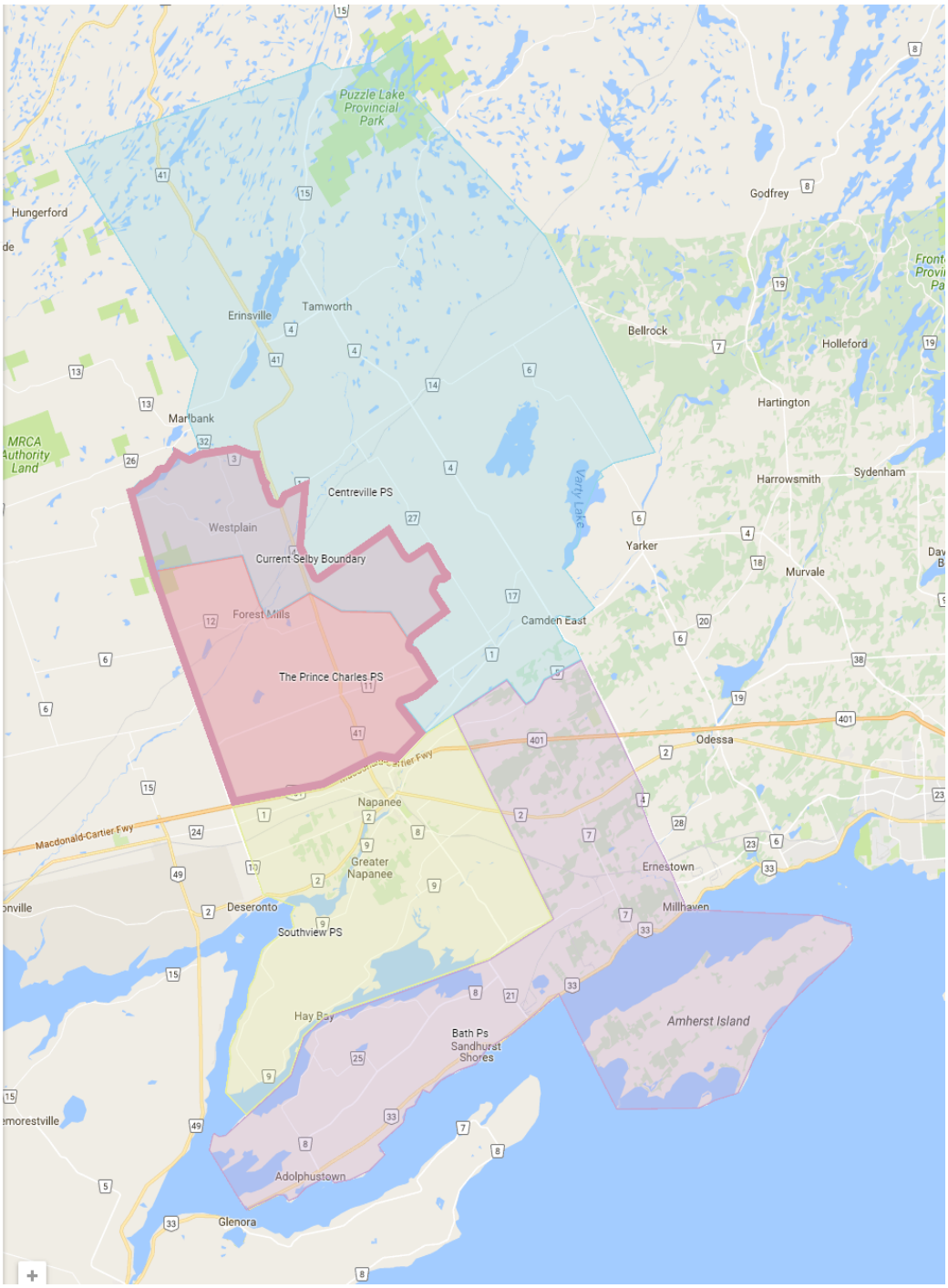
Sincerely,

Norah Brien

Selby, ON
K0K 2Z0

Proposed School Boundaries 2017-18

- Centreville PS
- Bath Ps
- Southview PS
- The Prince Charles PS
- Current Selby Boundary



Good evening,

Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight, Mayor Schermerhorn, Deputy Mayor Isbester and council members. I am here as a parent to Selby school students as well as a lifelong resident of the Selby School community and former Selby student, to ask you to put forth a motion to reject the Long Term Accommodation Report that was presented to you earlier this fall from the Limestone District School Board. As well as rejecting the report, I am asking you join me and members of our community, in writing letters to the Minister of Education Mitzie Hunter and Premier Kathleen Wynne requesting a moratorium on school closures until a more acceptable and fair format to assessing the viability of a school is implemented.

The long term accommodation plan recommendations, prepared by Ameresco Asset Sustainability Group, suggest opening a Pupil Accommodation Review in the 2017/18 school year which would see the closure of Selby School and the amalgamation of Selby students with the students of Tamworth, Enterprise, Centerville and Newburgh into one new school. However, this amalgamation does not include all Selby School students, nor does it include grade seven and eight students. Grade seven and eight students from all the schools in Stone Mills and Greater Napanee would be sent into NDSS and the majority of current Selby School students would be sent to Prince Charles in Napanee.

The way that Long Term Accommodation Review reports are compiled is seriously flawed and it is discriminatory towards our small and rural schools. In their report, Ameresco gives no other alternatives to closing schools and shifting boundaries. Ameresco used outdated and inaccurate information to base their recommendations on. They sourced their information from the government census, which was last done in 2011, they used facility condition indexes from 2012 and enrolment projections based on inflated numbers.

The Facility Condition Index is calculated by using the replacement cost of the school divided by the amount of repair the school needs, the higher the FCI percentage, the more prohibitive it is to repair the school. According to the report Selby School has an FCI of 95.3%, but approximately two years ago, Selby School applied for and received, a government grant for school repairs. With this grant the school was able to upgrade their electrical system and have the roof replaced, major repairs not included in this report.

The Ministry of Education standard for calculating a school's On The Ground Capacity (OTG), the maximum numbers of students the school can accommodate, is to take each grade, JK to grade eight, and give each grade the maximum number of students allowed. Rooms that are being used as a resource room, French room or computer room are "assigned" 12 students per room, even though realistically, a classroom cannot go in a library or computer room. Adding up the max class size with the extra "students" for the other rooms gives the OTG for a school. Therefore if a school's OTG is significantly higher than its current enrolment, that school is deemed under capacity.

Recently the Ministry of Education revised their capacity rates for schools and now all schools must operate at 100% capacity. Selby school has an on the ground capacity of 285 students. There are two French rooms, a computer room and a library, therefore giving our school an extra 48 student spaces. If

we subtract the 48 phantom students from our capacity of 285, this gives Selby School 237 student spaces, the current enrolment of Selby School is 236 students.

Selby School has the highest student enrolment of any rural school in our community and placed second in the EQAO (standardized) testing results for the entire Limestone school board. It is my opinion that Selby School is being considered for closure and boundary redefinition with the sole purpose to boost enrolment in Prince Charles, which according to the LTAP is declining. This is proven if you take a look at the existing boundary for Selby School and the proposed boundary for The Prince Charles, the majority of Selby students would be sent into The Prince Charles.

According to the Ameresco report, enrolment is declining in Napanee District Secondary School and is expected to fall to 756 students by 2030/31. Their suggestion to make NDSS function at 100% capacity is to send all the grade seven and eight students for our entire area to NDSS.

Not only are the Long Term Accommodation reports compiled using flawed information, they are based on guesses. In 2006, the LTAP report completed by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. was the catalyst to the closure of Westdale, H.H. Langford and Sandhurst Public Schools. In that report, Watson and Associates projected enrolment for Selby Public School to fall to 149 students for 2015/16, as I have mentioned earlier, Selby School has a current enrolment of 236 students.

The entire process of deciding the fate of a school has serious faults, from the LTP reports to the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) process. In 2009 The PAR Committee for H.H. Langford, Westdale and Sandhurst had their choice of two schools overruled by the Senior Staff of Limestone District School Board.

In the PARC report from December 2008, it stated that; "There was strong opposition to the splitting the Sandhurst catchment area and sending students in two different directions. Students in the existing Sandhurst catchment area attend Napanee District Secondary School for high school; students at Bath Public School go to Ernestown Secondary School for high school. The PARC felt it was most desirable for students in the Sandhurst catchment area to be able to attend Napanee District Secondary School for their high school program. The first choice of the PARC was to build two new schools – one new school on the existing Westdale Park site for students in the Westdale Park catchment area, and a second new school in a rural area for students in the Langford and Sandhurst catchment areas – and closing the three existing schools. The first choice for the senior staff of Limestone was to build one new school for all students on municipal services at the south end of Napanee, and close the three existing schools, sending some Sandhurst students to Bath Public School." Greater Napanee now has one school in the south end of town, combining Westdale, H.H. Langford and some of Sandhurst students, other students in the former Sandhurst catchment did indeed get sent to Bath PS.

How can the Ministry of Education and the Limestone Board say that the PARC process if fair, when it is obvious that the suggestions and desires of the PARC, students, families and the community are disregarded and what the Board wants, and has wanted all along, is favoured and is implemented?

Selby Public School is somewhat of a generational school. Former Selby students have grown up, some have left the community, but many have remained or moved back here to raise their children, myself included. Many parents bring their children to daycares here because of the fantastic reputation Selby School has. I am very afraid that without the school, our community will not thrive. Families will not want to move into an area without a school, they will seek housing in Stone Mills or in the town of Napanee.

I spoke recently with a real estate agent who told me; "My personal opinion is that schools do influence where families choose to live. We have seen families move into the catchment area for Selby because it's such a great school, with a great culture and fantastic teachers. Children that don't do well at other schools thrive at Selby. To lose Selby School will be a huge loss for the community and for our children. Historically property values around a sought after school command a higher price. With the proposed closure of so many of our rural schools, I think this will have a negative impact on our communities and will affect property values. We have seen a steady trend of rising property values but this increase may slow with families moving out of the area to seek housing closer to where their child or children are gaining an education. The amount of time it takes to sell a property may increase if the school, which is oftentimes the heart of the community, is no longer there."

So I am here tonight for myself and on behalf of my children, my neighbours, my friends, the entire community of Selby, the teachers and support staff and most importantly each and every student who attends or will attend Selby Public School; Please, add your voice to ours and let the Limestone District School Board and the Government of Ontario know that you do not support the destruction of our community. If we do nothing, then we are contributing to the problem when we should be part of the solution.

Norah Brien
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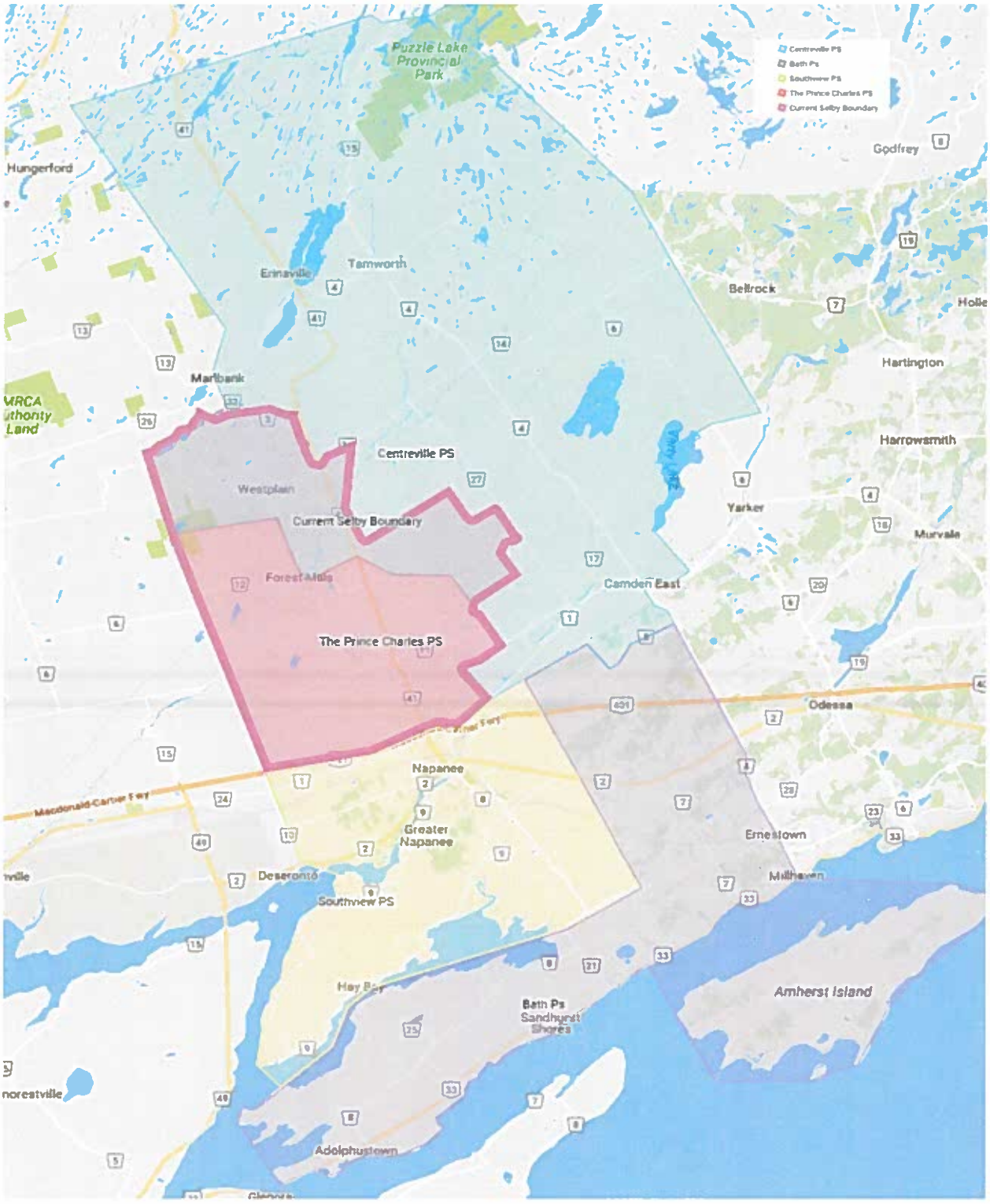
Selby, ON
K0K 2Z0
613-344-1704

norahbrien@gmail.com



Greater Napanee Schools - Current and Proposed Boundaries

Letter from http://saveourschools.ca/ -

10,000 Empty Spaces in Our Schools? Here's How the Ministry Defines Capacity

Until recently, parents and media had to accept the statement from the UCDSB that there are "10,000 empty student spaces" in the school board.

But now the school board has explained how the study, using Ministry guidelines, has calculated capacity. And it indicates that many of those empty seats in under-enrolled schools are an illusion. According to the recent FAQ (page 4), capacity is determined in the following way for elementary schools:

- the two Kindergarten classes are each "loaded" at 26 pupils
- other classrooms are "loaded" at 23 pupils (even though most classroom caps are set at 20)
- resource rooms are "loaded" at 12 pupils (!)

This means resource rooms such as a library, language room, and computer room each add 12 students to capacity. Even though the rooms are clearly meant to function in addition to classrooms, not as classrooms and technically shouldn't add to capacity at all.

Let's work a real example. Let's imagine a nice little rural elementary school which has one classroom for each of JK, SK and grades 1 through 6. There is also a small library and a resource room used for music/French/computers, etc.

The Elementary Teachers Union of Ontario has published their own advice for the ideal number of students in each of these classrooms.

Class Size in Single Grade Classes	
Junior Kindergarten	15 Students
Senior Kindergarten	16 Students
Grades 1, 2, 3	18 Students
Grades 4, 5, 6 (Junior)	20 Students
Grades 7, 8 (Intermediate)	22 Students

So our ideal rural school would have, according to the most knowledgeable professionals, a **total capacity of 145 students.**

But what is the capacity of this school according to the Ministry and therefore UCDSB? Using the formula above, which includes adding 12 extra students for each resource room, plus using the maximum amount of students in Kindergarten allowed by the province (26 pupils), the board and Ministry would calculate that this school's capacity is ***214*** pupils.

214 vs. 145!

So this school – which the teacher's union would consider to be at 100% capacity – is described by the board and Ministry as being at *67% capacity*. In other words, *at risk for closure*.

If you don't want to use the teachers' numbers, you can use the Ministry's own numbers. Class sizes are generally capped at 26 for kindergarten and 20 for primary grades. So if this school had the maximum number of students, it would still have only 172 students, and it would still be considered at only 84% capacity by the Ministry.

So these "10,000 empty student spaces" don't exist in the real world. But as a bureaucratic device to calculate capacity, these 10 000 empty spaces have the very real power to shut down schools.

A letter of support from Lanark County

Rural Ontario is facing a critical social and structural concern – the closing of rural schools. There's an alarming trend of local school boards closing low enrollment schools without considering the well-being of those students, their families and communities. Schools are an integral part of the economic and service infrastructure necessary for prosperity in our agricultural and rural communities.

Lanark County residents, parents, elected officials and the OFA share the concern of school closures – a result of cutbacks in operating expenses that's done at the expense of rural students and communities. Lanark County opposes school closure decisions that are made without the consideration of critical factors that impact the students, rural families and communities.

Too often important decisions like these are made without critical consideration to transportation, student employment opportunities and parental involvement. Rural school closures mean students are faced with lengthy bus rides to larger schools in urban areas. Hours could be spent each day on a bus, impacting students' attentiveness, learning potential and ability to participate in extracurricular activities. Longer commutes to school also impact students' opportunities for after school and part-time jobs.

Every community – urban and rural – relies on part-time student positions to run their businesses. Student jobs are also an integral part of gaining job experience and saving for post-secondary education. Schools increasingly rely on parent volunteers, and those volunteers will be lost if they can't travel the greater distance to a larger urban school.

Rural schools are also central to the community, acting as hubs for social, service and athletic events and community groups that rely on school buildings. We can't compromise the welfare and best interests of our next generation and our rural communities with school closures that do not account for all costs. Rural Ontario values its children and their education.

Leslie Drynan, CMO
County Clerk / Deputy CAO
Lanark County

This is a copy of the resolution recently passed by the Township of Drummond/North Elmsely

Resolution #16-043

Moved By: Councillor Ray Scissons

Seconded By: Steve Fournier

School Closure Resolution – Ontario Alliance Against School Closures

WHEREAS rural schools are integral to the future of rural communities; and

WHEREAS the Council of the Township of Drummond/North Elmsley are deeply concerned that the current process to consider rural school closures is not inclusive and the timelines do not provide for adequate community input; and

WHEREAS it's critical that continued student achievement and well-being form part of reviews of schools;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Township of Drummond/North Elmsley urge the Minister of Education to rewrite the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) to take into consideration community and economic value considerations and provide for a more democratic process of rural communities;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that until such time as PARG is rewritten that the Province place a moratorium on any more rural school closures; And that this resolution be forwarded to the Premier, Minister of Education, MPPs Bill Walker, Jim Wilson and Lisa Thompson, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Western Ontario Warden's Caucus and the counties and regions of Ontario.

This is a resolution recently passed by Northfolk County Council

Debbie Robertson, Chief Administrative Officer (Acting)/Municipal Clerk, Director Council and Legislative Services, Municipality of Grey Highlands

Re: Accommodation Review Request for Immediate Moratorium
Res. No. 12

Mover: Councilor Peter Black
Seconder: Councilor John Wells

Whereas rural schools are integral to the future of rural communities;

And Whereas the councils of the Counties of Bruce, Grey and Norfolk are deeply concerned that the current process to consider rural school closures is not inclusive and the timelines do not provide for adequate community input;

And Whereas it's critical that continued student achievement and well-being form part of reviews of schools;

Be It Resolved that the Council of Norfolk County urge the Minister of Education to rewrite the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) to take into consideration community and economic value considerations of rural communities and provide for a more democratic process;

And that until such time as PARG is rewritten that the Province place a moratorium on any more rural school closures;

And that this resolution be forwarded to the Premier, Minister of Education, MPPs Bill Walker, Jim Wilson and Lisa Thompson Carried.