



Laura Elliott, Director of Education and Secretary

May 30, 2017

Ministry of Education  
22nd Floor Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

**Attention: Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education**

Dear Minister Hunter:

I am writing to share with you the complex concerns identified by Thames Valley District School Board Trustees over the capital and ongoing funding for schools in our communities, particularly in rural areas. Let me begin by acknowledging our sincere appreciation for the generous financial support Thames Valley has received from the Ontario government. This has allowed us to build many new schools and additions that are the source of great pride among our students, parents, staff members and community.

We are also keenly aware of the problem of declining enrolment and share your concerns over the subsequent inefficiencies created by thousands of empty pupil places – particularly while facilities age and become costly to maintain. Through careful planning and an extraordinary amount of public consultation, Thames Valley has closed 41 schools since 2006. During that time, 67 new schools have been built or significantly renovated.

After having conducted a large number of pupil accommodation reviews, Trustees have reached the conclusion that, while communities deeply value their schools, the current funding formula puts small schools at a disadvantage. This is particularly true in rural areas where consolidations may result in longer travel times for students.

In some cases, the funding formula requires boards to consider closing smaller schools that are operating at or over capacity and in reasonably good repair – leading the public to ponder whether we are “fixing a problem that does not exist.” As elected Trustees, we find ourselves unable to fulfill the wishes of our constituents under the current capital funding process.

We respectfully request that you realign the funding process and policies for school consolidation. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Reid".

Matt Reid  
Chair of the Board

c.c.: Laura Elliott, Director of Education, Thames Valley District School Board  
Ontario School Board Chairs

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