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December 16, 2014

Michael Jacek
Senior Advisor
AMO

Dear Mr. Jacek:

Please find this letter in response to the recent announcement that the Ministry of Education is revising the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG) that governs the local school board process to consider school closures. It is understood that there are a number of significant proposed changes including:

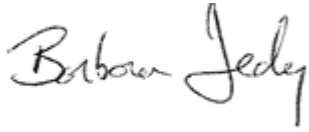
- a new role for municipal governments in the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) process;
- a shift away from consideration of the impact of school closures to community well-being and the local economy toward a more exclusive focus on student achievement;
- reduction in the duration and number of public meetings required for the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) process; and,
- provisions to consider school closings without an ARC.

These changes are of grave importance to rural municipalities such as Grey County, where the Bluewater District School Board serves both Grey and Bruce Counties. In May 2014 a report was produced identifying that there could possibly be as many as 18 schools in this district that were identified as underpopulated and therefore possibly subject to further accommodation review. It is vital for sustainable communities and economic development that municipalities be involved in these decisions. Given that the new guidelines are to be released in January 2015, please note the motion passed by Grey County Social Services Committee on Wednesday, December 10, 2014:

THAT staff be directed to provide comments to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario based on the Committee's discussions regarding the proposed new process for schools closures, including the need for municipalities to be consulted on the school closure process.

Accompanying this letter of comment is the Bluewater District School Board report identified above. Should you have further information you are seeking, please feel free to contact me directly.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barb Fedy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barb Fedy, B.A.

Director of Social Services

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