

From: Doug Reycraft <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, May 19, 2023 2:33 PM
To: Doug Reycraft <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Community Schools Alliance

This is being sent to all members of the Community Schools Alliance. Our mailing list includes the head of council and a staff member of all municipal members and we ask that this be shared with all members of the municipal council. Please let me know if a different staff member should be added to our list.

Our 2023 Annual Meeting will again be held virtually using Zoom. The date this year is Tuesday, August 15 at 7 pm.

The terms of office of three of our current Executive Committee members will expire August 31 of this year. We have received two resignations from other committee members so we will be conducting an election to fill five positions on the Executive Committee as part of this year's Annual Meeting. A Call for Nominations will be emailed about June 6th but a 2023 Nomination Form is attached to this email.

Also attached are our Constitution as amended in August, 2023 and the text of a presentation I made recently to the Ontario Legislature's Standing Committee on Social Policy during its hearings on Bill 98, Better Schools and Students Outcomes Act.

Doug Reycraft

Chair
Community Schools Alliance
[REDACTED]

Presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Bill 98

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee. Good afternoon. My name is Doug Reycraft and I am appearing before you as the chair of the Executive Committee of the Community Schools Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Standing Committee on Social Policy today.

The Community Schools Alliance was founded in 2009 and has been active since that time. Our goals as stated in our constitution include having students offered the opportunity to be educated in their home community and to have school boards and municipalities work together to build partnerships that allow community resources and services to be delivered with education in joint-use facilities. There is much in the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act that is consistent with these goals.

We were pleased to hear Minister Lecce's words about joint-use projects in his opening remarks in the debate on Bill 98. We fully agree that there is great benefit to a community, large or small, if a school board and a municipality can collaborate on building and operating a school and a community centre or recreation facility together instead of doing them in silos. We applaud the proposed amendment of the Education Act to require school boards to collaborate with municipalities to facilitate early and integrated planning for schools to meet current and future needs. That collaboration is already recommended by the Ministry's Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline announced in 2015. However, compliance with that Guideline has been inconsistent. Inserting the requirement into legislation and regulation will improve consistency.

The catalyst for the creation of the Community Schools Alliance was the widespread closure of schools in rural areas of the province around 2008. From its very beginning, the Alliance advocated strenuously for a moratorium on school closures, for changes to the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline and for changes to the 'funding formula' to better address the needs of small schools in rural and northern Ontario.

Our Alliance welcomed the moratorium that was announced in June, 2017 and we appreciate that the government has maintained it. It has spared communities and students in rural and northern Ontario the turmoil and stress that results from the announced intention to close their school.

We also welcomed the opportunity to be very involved in the thorough consultation conducted to improve the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline in 2017 and 2018. School boards develop their accommodation review and school closing policies using that provincial Guideline. That consultation concluded with the announcement of a new Guideline in April, 2018. Meanwhile, the moratorium remains in place and we were very pleased to hear Minister Lecce say in his opening remarks of the debate of Bill 98 “that it will stay in place until we have resolved long-standing concerns around the economic impacts of closing a school in a small town of this province”.

We recognize that the per pupil costs of operating a small school are greater than for a large one. There are several factors that make it impossible for certain economies of scale to be realized in small schools, regardless of whether they are full or under-utilized. Because of that, small schools been favourite targets of boards trying to downsize their total number of schools.

That reality will be somewhat mitigated by the Rural and Northern Education Fund. This fund, originally \$20 million and now up to \$21.6 million annually, was introduced at the same time as the announcement of the moratorium in 2017. It provides supplementary funding for school boards according to the number of schools each has that qualify under the formula for the Fund. Boards are required to use the RNEF funding to improve education results for students from rural and northern communities. In my own Board, the Thames Valley District, it has allowed extra staffing for at least three small secondary schools, each of which is the only secondary school in its town. The extra staffing permits those schools to provide a greater range of course options to satisfy the needs of their students. The Community Schools Alliance continues to advocate for a significant increase in the Fund to allow the qualifying schools across the province to enhance their program even more.

Much of the debate on Second Reading of Bill 98 addressed the 2023-24 funding of education recently announced by the Ministry of Education. The CSA shares the concern of the Official Opposition at Queen’s Park, school board associations and teachers’ unions that the increase in education grants will fall well short of the costs of inflation during the next school year. Failure to keep school board funding whole at a time of relatively high inflation will increase the pressure to close schools if and when the moratorium on school closures is ended. History tells us that the future existence of small schools in rural and northern Ontario will once again be at risk. Increasing the Rural and Northern Education Fund will help to mitigate that risk.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Committee today.

Constitution for the Community Schools Alliance

(As Amended August 9, 2022)

1. NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

The name of the organization is the Community Schools Alliance.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

The Community Schools Alliance is a non-profit organization committed to working with the Ontario Ministry of Education, municipalities and school boards to achieve a collaborative process that results in democratically determined decisions regarding education infrastructure. Such decisions should be based on principles that consider the broad impact, including but not limited to both social and fiscal effects, of any changes to the infrastructure on students and their community

3. GOALS

- a. Students will have the opportunity to be educated in their home community.
- b. All school boards and municipalities must work together to build creative partnerships that allow community resources and services to be delivered in conjunction with education.
- c. When surplus space develops in a school, the school board and the municipality must work together to identify community uses for the space before considering closure of the school.
- d. The input of students, parents, the host municipality and the community to the student accommodation review process used by school boards must be considered.
- e. The provincial government's formula for funding public education must recognize the critical value of schools to the local economy and the social fabric in rural and northern Ontario communities.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Every municipality in Ontario will have the opportunity to become a member of the organization by submitting the required fee with an application.
- b. Other individuals and bodies, including municipal organizations, may become members of the organization with the approval of the Executive Committee and upon payment of the required fee. However the membership fee shall be waived for an individual who is elected to the Executive Committee if the individual resides in a municipality that has paid its required membership fee but the individual has ceased to be an elected official of the municipal council.

5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- a. The affairs of the organization shall be controlled and managed by the Executive Committee. Subject to the terms of this constitution and to the resolutions of members adopted in the Annual Meeting, the Executive Committee may exercise all the powers of the organization.
- b. All members of the Executive Committee shall be members of the organization or elected officials of member municipalities.
- c. The Executive Committee shall comprise at least seven (7) but not more than thirteen (13) members and will consist of the following:
 - i. Chair;
 - ii. Vice-Chair;
 - iii. Secretary-Treasurer;
 - iv. A minimum of four (4) other persons.
- d. The initial Executive Committee shall be established by the first members of the organization referenced in 4.a. above.
- e. The term of office for the members of the initial Executive Committee shall extend until the next Annual Meeting but the members shall be eligible for re-election.

- f. At the first Annual Meeting of the Community Schools Alliance, eleven members shall be elected to the Executive Committee.
- g. At the first meeting of the Executive Committee following the first Annual Meeting, Executive Committee members shall identify four (4) members who shall serve a one-year term, four (4) members who shall serve a two-year term and three (3) members who shall serve a three-year term.
- h. Subsequent members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a three-year term at an Annual Meeting.
- i. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary-Treasurer shall be elected by the members of the Executive Committee following the Annual Meeting.
- j. Should a position on the Executive Committee become vacant, the remaining members of the Executive Committee may appoint a person to fill the vacancy and that person shall hold office for the balance of the term but shall be eligible for re-election.
- k. The office of an Executive Committee member shall become vacant if a member:
 - i. resigns;
 - ii. becomes unfit and/or incapable of acting as such;
 - iii. ceases to be a member of the organization;
 - iv. is removed by the Executive Committee by a resolution adopted by at least two-thirds (2/3) of its members.
 - v. misses three consecutive meetings.
- l. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be convened by the Chair on not less than ten (10) days' notice to members of the Committee.
- m. Quorum for meetings of the Executive Committee shall be a majority of the members of the Committee.
- n. Whenever possible, meetings of the Executive Committee shall be by conference call or by videoconference.

6. ANNUAL MEETINGS

- a. Whenever possible, Annual Meetings of the organization shall be held in conjunction with the Annual General Meetings of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

- b. Annual Meetings shall be convened by the Chair on not less than twenty-one (21) days' notice to all members of the organization. The notice shall state the date, time and place of the meeting and, in broad terms, the business to be transacted at the meeting.
- c. The business of an Annual Meeting shall include:
 - i. the presentation and adoption of the Annual Report of the Chair;
 - ii. the consideration of the Annual Financial Statement for the preceding calendar year;
 - iii. the election of members to serve on the Executive Committee;
 - iv. other matters as may be considered appropriate.
- d. All members of the organization and all elected officials of member municipalities in good standing shall be eligible to vote at an Annual Meeting.
- e. All voting at an Annual Meeting shall be by show of hands except for the election of members of the Executive Committee which shall be by ballot.

7. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a. An account in the name of the Community Schools Alliance shall be held by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.
- b. All monies received by the organization shall be deposited in the abovementioned account.
- c. All expenditures shall be made by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario on the recommendation of the Chair and/or the Secretary Treasurer.
- d. The organization's financial year shall be the calendar year.
- e. The Secretary Treasurer shall prepare an annual budget for the Community Schools Alliance and shall see to the general administration of the budget.
- f. The Secretary Treasurer shall prepare an Annual Financial Statement for each financial year. The Annual Financial Statement shall include a statement of income and expenditure.

- g. All expenditures shall require the authorization by the Executive Committee and will be used to promote the objectives of the organization.
- h. No portion of the income of the organization shall be paid to any person or to any member of the organization or the Executive Committee except as:
 - i. reasonable compensation for services actually rendered to the organization;
 - ii. reimbursement of actual costs or expenses reasonably incurred on behalf of the organization.

8. MEMBERSHIP FEES

The Executive Committee shall determine the required annual membership fees for individuals, municipalities, municipal organizations and other bodies.

9. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

- a. This Constitution may be amended by a resolution of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at an Annual Meeting.
- b. At least twenty-one (21) days' notice prior to the Annual Meeting stating the nature of the resolution to be proposed must be given to all members of the organization.

Nomination Form 2023

Executive Committee of the Community Schools Alliance

Candidates must be either (a) an elected member of the council of a municipality that has joined the Community Schools Alliance or (b) an individual who holds a personal membership in the Alliance as of July 1, 2022.

Nominee's Name (as it is to appear on the ballot):

Nominee's Municipality (if applicable):

Civic Address including postal code:

Email address: _____

Telephone: _____

I, the Nominee named in this Nomination Form, do hereby consent to such nomination and declare that I am qualified to be elected to the Executive Committee of the Community Schools Alliance.

Signature of Nominee and date:
