



Bluewater District School Board

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Sent by email: stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

February 23, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce:

Bluewater District School Board is in the process of building two new schools and has just completed Georgian Bay Community School this past September. While the board and community are grateful for the ministry's financial assistance in these projects, there is a problem with the approval of new school project requests when it comes to the sizing of the school. It is unfortunate that portable classrooms are already required to accommodate the growth in enrolment soon after a new school is opened. This is being experienced in Bluewater District School Board due to schools being built without the capacity to accommodate the entire school population.

The Board of Trustees for Bluewater District School Board request that population estimates, and projected enrolment data be considered in the funding formula for school size when building new schools.

Bluewater District School Board currently serves approximately 17,400 students across Bruce and Grey counties. Each county is benefitting from significant growth as more families choose to live and grow in our district. The board is profoundly grateful that the province has consistently recognized the necessity and the quality of our new school proposals.

However, under the financial formula for capital projects, a new school will frequently be funded based on enrolment and community demographic data from years before the school is built. Future growth is not considered, which is unfortunate as a new school in a community often draws families into the area.

This necessitates the use of portable classrooms to manage the overflow of students soon after a new school opens. The board must explain to students and families that, despite our expertise and best intentions, some students do not get full use of the new building. This experience can be discouraging for everyone.

To support Bluewater District School Board's mission to provide a quality education for every student in a safe, accepting, and caring environment, the Board of Trustees strongly recommends that population estimates and professionally projected enrolment data be considered in the funding formula for school size when building new schools.

Sincerely,

Jane Thomson
Chair

Jan Johnstone
Vice-Chair

cc: The Honourable Bill Walker, MPP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP, Huron-Bruce
Ministry of Education, Capital Policy Branch
Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) President
Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO)
Municipal Partners
Chairs of Ontario English Public School Boards