



446 – 10th Street, Hanover, Ontario N4N 1P9
Phone: 519-364-3050 E-mail: bruce@ofa.on.ca Website: www.brucefederation.ca

Bruce Federation of Agriculture would like to thank BWDSB for this opportunity to present our concerns in regards to the current situation with rural schools in Bruce County and across the province.

We do appreciate the challenge that BWDSB has in dealing with the declining student numbers in Bruce County coupled with the financial challenges of increasing operating costs.

However we strongly believe that our Bruce County children deserve the same access to local schools as our more urban friends. Students spending up to 2 hours or more a day on a school bus is simply not acceptable. Also the loss of the school in our rural towns has a huge negative impact on their viability.

We also appreciate that the focus for tonight's meeting is on "community partnerships". Certainly we do support the potential of some situations where there may be an opportunity for some legitimate "community partnerships". We also certainly compliment Arran-Eldersile and Chapmen's for offering considerable dollars to help keep their local schools open. However this is not a realistic long term solution and also potentially results in further downloading of provincial responsibilities on to already financially challenged municipalities.

BCFA strongly believes that there must be an immediate and full review and revision of the education strategy in Ontario. Rural Ontario is different than urban Ontario and has changed significantly over the past decade. Funding models and educational delivery models designed in past times simply do not effectively recognize or properly support rural Ontario education. A new rural education strategy must be established to deal with those differences.



BCFA did present a position paper on this proposal to Bruce County Council on June 1. Our proposal requested the County endorsement of:

BCFA asks that you endorse:

- 1. Our call for a new rural education strategy in Ontario with a singular focus on fairness to its rural students rather than its four publicly funded systems.**
- 2. That an immediate moratorium be placed on school closures until such time as the funding formula can be updated to reflect and support contemporary rural Ontario**

A copy of that presentation was circulated with this presentation. It was very well received by Bruce County Council.

BCFA will now be circulating that presentation and proposal to county Federations across Ontario asking for their support and suggesting that they also solicit their County Council's support.

IN UNITY THERE'S STRENGTH