



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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September 18, 2018

The Honourable Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Education
Mowat Block 22nd Floor,
900 Bay St,
Toronto, ON
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Thompson:

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) once again congratulates you on your appointment as Minister of Education. We believe that together we can accomplish much to make our farming and food sector a driving force in a vibrant Ontario economy.

In order to keep farm families on the farm and maintain their substantial contributions to the economy, we require access to a variety of affordable services and infrastructure. This includes our schools. Schools play a very important role in rural communities. Not only are the schools a place where our children spend a large portion of their days being educated; they are also our children's playgrounds, adult learning centres, child care centres, community centres, recreational facilities, and meeting halls.

Without such facilities available, quality of life declines and it becomes difficult to maintain a viable population and economic base in rural areas. However, the current process in place for Pupil Accommodation Reviews, used to determine which schools should be closed, does not recognize or consider these very important aspects of rural schools. **OFA requests a moratorium be placed on school closures until the issues with the flawed decision-making process about school closures are addressed.**

On behalf of OFA's more than 37,000 farm family businesses, we look forward to working with the Ministry to ensure a process that will accurately reflect the best interests of our students and their community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Currie', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Keith Currie
President