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Randy Hillier, MPP
Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Ave, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

22 November 2019

Dear Minister,

I am writing you today regarding two schools in Lanark County that are long past and overdue for redevelopment. I understand that the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) has identified Caldwell Public School in Carleton Place and Perth and District Collegiate Institute (PDCI) in Perth to the Ministry's Capital Priorities Listing for 2019-2022.

Lanark County has largely been overlooked when it comes to education capital spending. It has been more than twenty years since any major capital projects have been undertaken in the County, and as a result these two schools are now facing significant age and capacity pressures. While I appreciate the financial pressures this government has inherited after 15 years of mismanagement by the previous government, this capital spending has become critical.

At about 8% growth between Carleton Place and Beckwith (the provincial average is about 3%), Caldwell Public School will very soon be completely inadequate to serve these Ottawa bedroom communities. Without a replacement for the school, the local school boards are facing significant busing costs to move students from the area across the County to other schools. I think you would agree that lengthy bus rides are not beneficial to the education of elementary students, and complex transportation challenges put significant financial and logistical burdens on young families.

PDCI in Perth presents an opportunity for the school board to collaborate with the Town of Perth on a rebuild. The Town of Perth, with support from the Township of Tay Valley and the Township of Drummond North Elmsley have submitted an Infrastructure Canada's *Infrastructure Program: Community, Culture and Recreations Stream (ICIP)* to build a new recreation complex on a large plot of land owned by the Town of Perth. There is more than enough land to accommodate a new school attached to this recreation complex, and the UCDSB has expressed interest in examining such a project with the Town of Perth and their partner townships. UCDSB would not find themselves shopping for land upon which to build a new school, and the cost of the new school would further be reduced because the recreation complex would provide a gymnasium, a pool, and an ice surface.

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Minister, with the government demonstrating some significant steps in reducing costs while maintaining good levels of quality services, I believe collaborations such as the one proposed for PDCI with the Town of Perth's Recreation Complex and the UCDSB proposal are exactly the kind of "outside the box" thinking we require if we are to bring this province out of deficit spending, while ensuring that we have quality education facilities for future generations.

I look forward to your support for both of these priorities, and your timely reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rand Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "M".

Copies:
UCDSB
Town of Perth
Town of Carleton Place