



July 6th, 2021

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

via email

Dear Hon. Minister Lecce,

RE: Proposed Legislative Changes to Education

On behalf of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Lanark, I write to you today, to express our full support for Upper Canada District School Board's quest to seek information and clarification on the proposed legislative changes to education in Ontario.

In June, Lanark County Council received a delegation from the Board of Trustees of the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) to highlight their concerns related to a proposed plan by the Ministry of Education to retain and expand the remote learning options put in place to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic throughout Ontario.

We believe that the current online model used by the UCDSB was developed to support remote students during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and was not intended to be more than a contingency for program delivery. Both the emergency models of remote learning implemented during the pandemic, as well as the proposed models highlighted by the media (regarding pending legislation) in March 2021, do not address concerns about optimal learning environments for students or, the way that we can sustain small schools in rural, remote and northern settings.

Both the UCDSB and the community at large recognizes the necessity for the existing fully functional online learning consortium in Ontario (the Ontario e-Learning Consortium) for students who require specialized courses not available at their school. This arrangement for on-line learning is fully compatible with rural, remote, and northern schools, does not have an impact of student enrollment counts for the operation of small schools, is fully funded and involves local staff in the delivery of the program. In addition, we all recognize that our future involves increased enhancements to technology, online and remote learning options.

Minister, we are concerned with the lack of broad consultation with school boards, municipalities, students and parents regarding the proposed changes to make remote learning a permanent option in the provincial education system and potential impacts of such legislative change.

LANARK COUNTY

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The potential adverse effect on the sustainability of small rural schools and municipalities, should this feature become a permanent choice for students and families is worrisome, as is the potential reduction in funding levels over the long term and the diminished local influence on education.

For these reasons, we ask that you provide us with further information as it relates to the proposed legislative changes and/or the process to provide comments via formal consultation.

Yours truly,



Christa Lowry
Warden

cc: Upper Canada District School Board, Chair John McAllister
Local Municipalities within Lanark County