

Type of Decision									
Meeting Date	Friday, August 7, 2009				Report Date	Wednesday, July 29, 2009			
Decision Required	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
Direction Only		Information Only			Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed
REPORT TITLE									
Community Schools Alliance Report #07/08/09/206									

SUBJECT: Community Schools Alliance is a newly formed organization with the goal of lobbying the provincial government to readdress the way that school closures and reduced funding for rural schools are being decided.

Background/Executive Summary: The accompanying letter of the Community Schools Alliance explains the situation in more detail. The goal of the organization is to provide time for the Ministry, school boards, and municipalities to work together to develop policies that address all needs in this era of declining enrolments and reduced funding especially to rural schools. Our community has already been affected by budget cuts and declining enrolment with the closure of Keys Public School and the rescheduling of school start times. Slowing the process and involving the communities in the decision may save some rural schools. This resolution is asking for time.

Recommendation:

WHEREAS communities across Ontario are concerned with the Accommodation Review Committee process and the impact this flawed process has on the socio-economic fabric of our municipalities;

AND WHEREAS many schools are the hubs of their communities, a better accommodation review system is needed to address the educational facility needs of our residents;

AND WHEREAS a system to address the educational facility needs in Ontario must ensure that school boards and municipal councils partner on decisions regarding education infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS greater accountability for school board decisions is needed;

AND WHEREAS a thorough review of the governance model for school accommodation decisions must include an opportunity to appeal these decisions;

AND WHEREAS the accommodation review process should respect and value the input of students, parents, the community and municipality;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria supports the Community Schools Alliance and petition the Province on Ontario to implement a "smart moratorium" on disputed school closing to provide the opportunity for the Ministry of Education, school boards and municipalities to work together to develop policies addressing such issues as planning for declining enrolments, a mutually agreed upon Accommodation Review Committee process, a review of funding to rural and small community schools, and transparency and accountability between municipalities and school boards.

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to our MP, The Minister of Education, AMO and the local school boards.

Options/Discussion:

Financial Considerations/Budget Impact: None

Policy Impact: None

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,
Municipal Clerk

Melinda Reith