

Ministry of Education

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October 31, 2006

Dear School Board Chair,

Today, the Director of Education received the government's new *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines* that will serve as the basis for new accommodation review policies at your board.

Direction for the guidelines was proposed in *Good Places to Learn*, and the final guidelines reflect that original direction. As well, they reflect consultation and examination of recent accommodation review processes. The guidelines are a key part of this government's commitment to school renewal, to keeping good schools open, and to helping boards manage their facilities in a way that supports student achievement.

These guidelines will enable your trustees to create a fair, transparent, and constructive dialogue with your communities. There will be meaningful community participation that will focus on the value of a school to its students, to the board, to the community, and to the local economy. While accommodation reviews are never easy, this community participation is critical to establishing a process based on trust. I believe the policies that the trustees approve, based on the new *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines*, will give you better tools to serve your students and your communities.

The next step is for your board staff to revise current policies to be consistent with the new *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines*. Trustees will then approve the new policies. Once these policies are approved, the board can announce the start of accommodation reviews of specific schools. The minimum seven-month timeline to complete an accommodation review, not including holidays, would mean that few schools would be approved for closure by the end of June 2007.

I recognize that some communities are concerned about the future of specific schools. The new board of trustees may want to hold a public meeting to inform the community about the process and timelines outlined in the *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines*, and to explain the board's next steps. If the board has any updates on previously announced timelines for review, such as those included in capital plans, you could share that information with the public as well. It may be necessary to clarify that the Ministry of Education views the board's long-term capital plan as an interim document that provides a first step in the ongoing capital planning process, and that this document is intended to enable boards, the community and the Ministry to review capital needs together and determine priorities for investment.

As public officials, we share an obligation for transparency when building strong relationships with the public. I believe these guidelines will support you in this effort and help you improve the achievement of students in your board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Wynne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Wynne
Minister of Education