

February 18, 2019

Letter to the Honourable Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson

Dear Minister Thompson

In early 2018, The Ontario Alliance Against School Closures (OAASC) conducted a Post Consolidation Experience Survey of students and parents who were affected by school closures that occurred since the revised [2015 Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline \(PARG\)](#) was put in place.

Although we expected to see many negative responses from disappointed parents and students, we did not anticipate the extent of the unhappiness and difficulties experienced in adjusting to the changes caused by the closures. The survey comments of parents and students have put a human face on the tragedy of a hasty school closure agenda and have shown specific and real hardships caused by these decisions. Most disturbing is the extent to which students and parents have spoken of serious emotional damage caused by school closure decisions.

The emotional wellness of students and families was never a point of consideration in any of the PARG documents, and consequently, was not a factor in pupil accommodation review deliberations on school closures. Survey comments about suicide concerns, student alienation, loneliness and anxiety are all important factors in attributing to an unhappy and maladjusted student.

With all values excluded from the [2018 guideline](#), the new language has created a manual that focuses on the impact of planned closures and is no longer an effective tool for a pupil accommodation review.

There are still 99 schools slated for closure under the Wynne government's [2015 PARG](#). Based on the survey findings, we ask that you re-examine these closure decisions and develop a new guideline which includes those "values" that were excised from the [2009 document](#). Restoring a working relationship between the school board and community based on trust, transparency and accountability must be a priority.

We share the results of this survey in the [attachment](#) and ask that you examine the report and its findings.

We look forward to your response.

Regards,

Ontario Alliance Against School Closures

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