

Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Metro Chapter

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Submitted to Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne, MPP

Minister of Education

Canadian Pensioners Concerned Metro (CPC Metro) is a chapter of the Ontario division of Canadian Pensioners Concerned, a charitable, non-profit organization focused primarily, but not exclusively on matters affecting seniors. Quality of life for people of all ages is our overriding concern. The following are CPC Metro comments and/or recommendations with reference to the planned school closings in Ontario.

1. Elementary and secondary school buildings and grounds belong to the people of Ontario and should not be sold to the private sector without a serious consultation with all community stakeholders to discover what other options of benefit to the community are practicable.
2. Before a decision is made to close any school it should be thoroughly inspected to determine its suitability for multi-purpose community use, including its potential continued use for educational purposes with a smaller number of classrooms.
3. It has long been known that well-planned, inclusive community recreational activities and cultural programs designed around the needs of the children and their communities are effective elements

in the reduction of school drop-out rates and of youth crime and violence.

4. The size of a school is not necessarily a determinant of the quality of the education its students receive. Because of the way in which the school funding policy is written, educational funding is based on the number of students which means that it is possible to fund a greater variety of options in schools with a higher enrollment. However, in schools with a smaller student population many of these deficiencies could be remedied through community volunteer participation.

5. The 2008-12 Community use of Schools Policy funding should be implemented, but that its use be monitored on an on-going basis by the provincial government to ensure that school boards lower the fees for community use, that the space be available year round, and that the uses to which the space is put serves the interests of the community in general as well as the students.

6. Although there have been some minor changes to the school funding policy, it would appear to be an ideal time for a complete review in consultation with school boards, parents, educators and other interested parties in order to draft a funding policy more suitable to the 21st century, to the province and its citizens but most of all to the children who are our future.

Submitted by:

Jean Gordon, Sylvia Hall and Margaret Watson on behalf of Metro Chapter, Canadian Pensioners Concerned

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cc Chair and Trustees of the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board.