

The Honourable Lyle Stewart  
Room 334  
Legislative Building  
2405 Legislative Drive  
Regina SK S4S 0B3

20 January 2017

Dear Minister Stewart,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and as a concerned parent of school-age children.

Recently the Saskatchewan Government released a document commissioned from Dan Perrins called *Educational Governance Review Report, Kindergarten to Grade 12*. I understand our province is facing significant financial hardship during this time of slow resource revenue, but Minister Stewart, the options presented in this document would end up costing more than any potential savings would be able to recoup. While the suggestions to centralise some aspects of Administration are good suggestions, and I'm positive Saskatchewan School Boards are in favour of them as well as basic good governance best practices and responsible management, all four options for educational governance are bad for the province.

Elected school boards are the paragon of good governance and responsible stewardship of our most valuable asset – our children and their futures. We elect school board members through a democratic process that ensures local voices are heard at the decision-making stage. Our school board directors live, work, and raise their children in our towns and RMs. Our school boards are directly accountable to us, the citizens and taxpayers in the school division. An appointed board would mean a loss of awareness and decision-making about our children's education. I strongly, strongly urge you to do the right thing and insist that Saskatchewan remain a leader in Canada when it comes to educational governance, and retain our duly elected school boards.

In 2006, Saskatchewan underwent a round of school division amalgamations that ended up costing the province more during the two-year transition period than any subsequent savings was able to recover for years. Those amalgamations saw many schools close as broad guidelines were introduced that mandated the number of students a school must serve for the school to be considered "viable". For many small towns and rural areas in Saskatchewan, this meant they lost their school. As you know, Minister Stewart, losing a school is the death knell of a town in rural Saskatchewan.

While this report certainly doesn't advocate school closures, we have seen dozens of schools close every time divisions are amalgamated. The process of amalgamation is itself disruptive, time-consuming, and costly. Worse, it detracts from student learning and educational achievement. Please don't gamble with Saskatchewan children's future. Please listen to our school boards, our teachers, our administrators, our School Community Councils, and Saskatchewan citizens and parents who reject all four options presented in this document but who advocate for administrative centralisation and good governance policies.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.