



45 Lone Pine Road
Port Severn, ON L0K 1S0

November 21, 2016.

Norm Miller, MPP, Parry Sound Muskoka
Patrick Brown, MPP, Simcoe North
Tony Clement, MP, Parry Sound Muskoka
Ab Falconi, Superintendent of Education, Simcoe-Muskoka Catholic District School Board
Larry Hope, Director of Education, Trillium Lakelands School Board
Louise Clodd, Public School Trustee
Carol Corriveau-Truchon, Separate School Trustee

Re: Schools in Honey Harbour, Township of Georgian Bay

Dear Sirs/Mesdames,

By way of introduction, I served as the Public School Trustee from 1991-1996 on the former Muskoka Board of Education (now part of Trillium Lakelands School Board) and am currently President of SEGBAY Chamber of Commerce. SEGBAY serves the villages and hamlets in the Township of Georgian Bay and surrounding communities in Severn and Tay Townships. Our mandate is to support business and commerce, as well as the social well-being within the areas we serve.

There are over 12,000 residents and transient boaters that annually use Honey Harbour to access their water-based residences and moorings. Closing both schools in Honey Harbour, rather than looking at a local co-location, will not only destroy the social fabric of the Honey Harbour community, but also the economic engine and well-being of the service providers such as marinas, contractors, grocery stores, lodgings, restaurants, outfitters, fishing guides, Libraries, boutiques, Beausoleil Island National Park, and our Church. Many of the local families will move away to be closer to their children's schools.

The Honey Harbour and Port Severn area is slated for residential development of over 400 various types of housing units over the next few years. What attracts families to settle in a community is access to local education, employment opportunities and diverse recreational activities. What attracts retirees and seasonal residents, as well as visitors, is not only the wonderful geography, but also the services provided by the local businesses.

SEGBAY believes that the current School Boards' Accommodation Review process is not reflective of the reality of our rural school and community life. They do not take into account all the educational, social and economic aspects of school closings on small rural communities. Further, SEGBAY requests that the Minister of Education initiate an immediate moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process until such time as a review of the above-mentioned impacts on the community be studied, completed and the results and recommendations be considered.

The residents of the Township of Georgian Bay contribute over \$4.2 million to the Trillium Lakelands Board for the education of some 40 children (over \$105,000 per pupil) and almost \$500,000 to the SMCDSB for the education of some 16 children (over \$30,000 per pupil). Greater consideration and due diligence needs to be given to provide local schooling in exchange for the funding provided, rather than bussing the students many hours away daily and dismantling the social and economic fabric of the Honey Harbour Community.

We strongly encourage you to carefully consider the wide-ranging impacts that school closure will have on the Honey Harbour community. It will be devastating. We question if our children's education will actually be any better at a larger school, and cannot imagine that it will be worth two to three hours in a bus each day. Imagine the impact on our children's health with all that extra sitting. Finally - how much money will actually be saved by the closure of our schools? Hours of daily bussing versus maintenance of an existing school.

Please do not close the schools in Honey Harbour. Let our children learn where they live and play.

However, if there is no alternative but to close the schools, then please have them bussed to a school south of the municipality, to Victoria Harbour, as they would later be attending High School in Midland. Going north to Glen Orchard makes no sense whatsoever; these families travel to Coldwater, Midland and Barrie for specific services like medical and dental care that they don't have in Honey Harbour. The natural trade routes are to Simcoe county NOT to Muskoka.

It seems there has been a lack of communication by the School Boards. School Board Trustees are elected representatives accountable for public education of the communities they represent but the Trustees we have voted for have not participated in the community meetings and have dodged the requests for information from our citizens. This is troubling.

Please take our request for consideration to the Board review process. Rural schools do work, and the children graduating from those schools will take with them their own unique experiences and individual perspectives to contribute to society.

We sincerely hope to hear from you.

Yours truly,
SEGBAY Chamber of Commerce

Paul S. Herriott, HBA, CFP
President.