

AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Create Positive, Inclusive Learning Environments, and Maximize Outcomes for Students

DIRECTOR'S INFORMATION / ACTION REPORT

TO: Regular Board Meeting – Tuesday, January 23, 2018

AGENDA ITEM: 5.3 a)

SUBJECT: Rural and Northern Education Fund

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On June 28, 2017, the Ministry of Education (Ministry) announced a plan to strengthen rural and northern education in the province of Ontario. According to the communications provided, the plan responds to the feedback collected during the rural education engagement sessions held during the months April to June 2017. The *Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education*, a document provided by the Ministry and available on the Ministry's website (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/rural_schools.html) is attached.
- 1.2 The plan includes a new allocation for the 2017/2018 budget year: the Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF). The fund is to be used to improve education opportunities for students that reside in rural communities. The RNEF allocation is based on a Ministry defined list of eligible schools and will flow to boards through the base Grants for Student Needs. At this time, there has been no confirmed extension of these funds to continue beyond the 2017/2018 year. The RNEF, which is enveloped, comes with additional reporting requirements, which will be part of the financial year-end reporting cycle.

2.0 Local Implementation

- 2.1 Twenty-nine Avon Maitland DSB (AMDSB) schools met the Ministry's eligibility requirements. The schools that did not meet the Ministry's criteria are located in the city of Stratford. The list of eligible schools is also attached.
- 2.2 AMDSB has received \$838,666 of the RNEF allocation and this value has been included in the 2017/2018 Revised Estimates figures.
- 2.3 In determining the spending plan for these funds, Senior Administration has considered the intent of the RNEF and spent considerable time exploring how the funds would be best used in AMDSB. The initial plans were shared verbally with the Board of Trustees at the October 24, 2017 board meeting.
- 2.4 The RNEF spending plan was submitted with the 2017/2018 Revised Estimates, via a Data Form in the Ministry's Education Finance Information System. *Data Form A.2 – Enveloping – Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF)* is attached for information.
- 2.5 Staff will bring forward the final RNEF report as the fiscal year closes.

Cheri Carter
Associate Superintendent of Financial Services and
Treasurer of the Board

Dr. Lisa Walsh
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education

Message from Minister Hunter

When rural students are provided with meaningful opportunities for an excellent education, rural communities thrive.

During our recent engagement, we heard many ways in which students in rural and Northern communities would benefit from additional targeted support with the flexibility to address the unique needs of each community. We also heard about how our publicly funded education system must do more to engage communities and pursue shared use of space when making decisions about the future of schools.

That's why we are taking immediate steps towards overhauling the process that school boards use when reviewing their schools. As well, we are investing in new supports for rural and Northern students that will be tailored to the unique needs of their communities. Our government is committed to working with school boards and communities to make changes that best support all of our students.

Rural education engagement sessions

About the engagement

From April 21st to June 9th, the government hosted a province-wide engagement to seek input from parents, students, communities, municipal governments and school boards on how to strengthen education in rural and northern Ontario. People across Ontario were invited to read a discussion paper and provide input in-person or online.

In-person sessions

Public and stakeholder engagement sessions were held in 10 rural and Northern communities across the province:

- Merrickville
- Honey Harbour
- Thedford
- Markstay
- Markdale
- Wawa
- Nipigon
- Lakefield
- Picton
- Amherstburg

By the Numbers

- Over **640** people participated in the in-person sessions
- Approximately **500** people completed online surveys or sent emails

Ontario's Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education

1. Strengthen the Pupil Accommodation Review Process

What We Heard:

- The process that school boards use to review their schools must be improved, in particular for rural communities.
- The process must be more inclusive of community and student perspectives, and balanced with input related to community impact.
- Clear principles and goals for student achievement and well-being should be established for pupil accommodation reviews, rather than just cost savings.

What We're Doing:

- Overhauling the [pupil accommodation review process](#) over the coming months. School boards will not begin new accommodation reviews while the process is being revised, though they are encouraged to continue to pursue joint-use projects between school boards. Revisions to the process will give consideration to:
 - impact on communities and student well-being
 - longer timelines
 - more accommodation options
 - clearer roles for students as well as staff and elected officials from both school boards and municipal governments.

2. Supporting Quality Education in Rural and Northern Communities

What We Heard:

- Quality education exists in rural schools in communities across Ontario. But there is a need for enhanced access to transportation options, mental health and other services, as well as experiential and technology-enabled learning opportunities.

What We're Doing:

- Investing an additional \$20 million, starting in September 2017, through the new Rural and Northern Education Fund. This funding will be dedicated to school boards to enhance education for students in rural and Northern communities.
- This funding will be based on a new rural formula, based on number and location of students in small and rural communities.
- School boards will target funding for rural education based on local needs and report publicly on how the funding is used, such as:
 - improve programming and support services in rural schools, such as French immersion, arts education and guidance counselling
 - continue the operation of rural schools
 - enhance student transportation options such as late bus runs and mobile e-learning through tablets or Wi-Fi
- Working with school boards and teachers to support and promote effective teaching techniques for classrooms with three or more grades in small schools.

Other New Supports for Quality Education in Rural and Northern Communities

- Improving access to e-learning and a [minimum broadband speed](#) of 1 Megabit per second per student in rural and Northern schools across Ontario, over the next four years, through new and updated network infrastructure and improved network capacity.
- Enhancing access to [dedicated support for students with special education needs](#) in rural and Northern Ontario, including more mental health and behavioural support professionals.
- Expanding experiential learning opportunities for rural and northern students working with local industries such as agriculture, food processing, mining and forestry through the [Career Kick-Start Strategy](#), including growing the percentage of Grade 11 and 12 students participating in Specialist High Skills Major programs from 14 per cent to 25 per cent over the next three years.

3. Supporting the Sustainable Use of School Space in Rural Communities

What We Heard:

- Greater and earlier communication and collaboration must be encouraged between school boards, municipal governments, community partners, and the province about long-term joint community planning.
- More provincial support and guidance must be provided on how to pursue community partnerships in school space.
- To enable greater use of shared space between school boards and with community partners, additional supports will be required to address the unique issues that may arise.

What We're Doing:

- Revising the Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG) over the coming months to encourage school boards and municipal governments to have more open communication with and community partners in discussions around shared space in schools.
- Providing additional planning and financial supports for school boards that work together to share school space, while reviewing all capital proposals submitted by school boards for new schools or additions to ensure joint-use opportunities between boards have been explored before funding is granted.

Other New Supports for Sustainable Use of School Space in Rural Communities

- Moving forward with the recommendations in [Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan](#), including working with the Ministry of Infrastructure to build a [resource network](#) that will support community hubs and provide school boards with \$50 million in capital funding in 2016-17 and 2017-18, to retrofit available school space for use by community partners or to replace existing community space, for example, in schools that may close or be sold.
- Working with community stakeholders, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Infrastructure will develop joint approaches to support better coordination of service delivery and integrated local planning in rural and northern communities, including better communication around school board capital planning.
- Investing a historic annual \$1.4 billion in [school renewal](#) and repairs to ensure all schools, including those in rural and northern communities, are safe and healthy learning environments in a state of good repair.

**PRELIMINARY LIST OF ELIGIBLE RURAL SCHOOLS/
LISTE PRÉLIMINAIRE DES ÉCOLES RURALES ADMISSIBLES
Avon Maitland District School Board**

ITEM/ARTICLE	CAMPUS ID	SFIS/SIIS	BSID/BDICE	PANEL/PALIER	SCHOOL NAME/NOM D'ÉCOLE
1	05463	266	066699	E	Brookside Public School
2	05547	384	093718	E	Central Perth Elementary School
3	05600	467	112917	E	Clinton Public School
4	05752	686	163619	E	Listowel Eastdale Public School
5	05783	731	175170	E	Elma Township Public School
6	05805	771	190527	E	Exeter Elementary School
7	05933	973	578519	E	North Woods Elementary School
8	05982	1048	272319	E	Bluewater Coast Elementary School
9	06022	1115	268003	E	Howick Central Public School
10	06025	1119	268640	E	Hullett Central Public School
11	06030	1134	273694	E	Huron Centennial Public School
12	06295	1549	366021	E	Milverton Public School
13	06298	1555	927120	S	Mitchell District High School
		24214	135064	E	Mitchell District HS - Elementary
14	06306	1566	372781	E	Mornington Central School
15	06365	1652	406040	E	North Easthope Public School
16	06598	2013	478133	E	Goderich Public School
17	06699	2184	523267	E	South Perth Centennial Public School
18	06720	2207	528650	E	Sprucedale Public School
19	06730	2230	535508	E	Stephen Central Public School
20	06802	2346	566667	E	Upper Thames Elementary School
21	08160	5272	899569	S	Central Huron Secondary School
22	08231	5398	913600	S	Goderich District Collegiate Institute
		11329	450242	E	GDCI Elementary
23	08285	5491	923095	S	Listowel District Secondary School
24	08364	5634	504475	E	Seaforth Public School
25	08376	5665	943118	S	South Huron District High School
		19495	469900	E	South Huron Elementary School
26	08384	5675	944807	S	St Marys D.C. & V.I.
		13373	100438	E	St Marys DCVI - Elementary
27	08434	5763	953776	S	FE Madill Secondary School
		19496	181908	E	FE Madill Elementary School
28	12239	13309	285535	E	Little Falls Public School
29	12370	11327	517103	E	Maitland River Elementary School

Data Form A.2 - Enveloping - Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF)

1	RNEF - Opening Balance		-
Schedule 5.1, item 2.5.1, col. 1		
2	RNEF - Interest Earned		-
Schedule 5.1, item 2.5.1, col. 3		
3	RNEF - Current Year Allocation		838,666
Section 5B, item 5.15		
4	RNEF - Total Amount Available		838,666
Sum of items 1 to 3		

Board Level Use of RNEF Funding

Enter Board level Expenses in which RNEF Funding was spent

		RNEF Expense Category - Board	Description Category	Amount
5.1	RNEF - Board level expense 1	A - Enhance student transportation / A - Améliorer le transport des étudiants	Additional late Bus Runs in Rural Secondary School, to allow for extracurricular (after school) activities	16,000
5.2	RNEF - Board level expense 2	X - Other uses as approved by the ministry / X - Autres utilisations approuvées par le ministère	Video Conferencing Technology to support enhanced communication plan with all schools	8,500
5.3	RNEF - Board level expense 3	X - Other uses as approved by the ministry / X - Autres utilisations approuvées par le ministère	Funds to Support Equity Strategy for Staff and Students. Includes recruitment (of staff) activities to promote AMDSB to potential educators	60,227
5.4	RNEF - Board level expense 4			-
5.5	RNEF - Board level expense 5			-
5.6	RNEF - Board level expense 6			-
5.7	RNEF - Board level expense 7			-
5.8	RNEF - Board level expense 8			-
5.9	RNEF - Board level expense 9			-
5.10	RNEF - Board level expense 10			-
5.11	RNEF - Total board level expenses			84,727

6	RNEF - Total school level expenses from existing schools		-
RNEF School level data input form, total of Expenses column		

School level use of RNEF funding for schools not on the list

Enter School level expenses for schools that do not appear on the EFIS school list in which RNEF Funding was spent

		RNEF Expense Category - School	Description Category	Amount
7.1	RNEF - Other school level expense 1	A - Maintain operations / A - Maintenir les opérations	Expenses incurred to maintain small rural schools, in absence of ability to hold PAR processes.	400,000
7.2	RNEF - Other school level expense 2	B - Improved programming or staff supports for students / B - Amélioration de la programmation ou du soutien du personnel pour les étudiants	Mennonite Population Supports: EA Support for Low German, Secondary Sections for Mennonite Programming, Mennonite Community Supports	90,932
7.3	RNEF - Other school level expense 3	B - Improved programming or staff supports for students / B - Amélioration de la programmation ou du soutien du personnel pour les étudiants	Additional Elem Teaching Time to support schools with small Admin (Principal) complement	46,885

Data Form A.2 - Enveloping - Rural and Northern Education Fund (RNEF)

7.4	RNEF - Other school level expense 4	B - Improved programming or staff supports for students / B - Amélioration de la programmation ou du soutien du personnel pour les étudiants	Student Safety and Wellbeing: Enhancement to Supervision budget, 2 Strive (Behavior) EAs at Secondary Schools, enhancement to Mental Health Strategy	116,122
7.5	RNEF - Other school level expense 5	B - Improved programming or staff supports for students / B - Amélioration de la programmation ou du soutien du personnel pour les étudiants	Investment in Distance Education Program, accessed by all Secondary Schools in District,	100,000
7.6	RNEF - Other school level expense 6			-
7.7	RNEF - Other school level expense 7			-
7.8	RNEF - Other school level expense 8			-
7.9	RNEF - Other school level expense 9			-
7.10	RNEF - Other school level expense 10			-
7.11	RNEF - Total other school level expenses			753,939
8	RNEF - Total school level operating expensesItem 6 + item 7.11			753,939
9	RNEF - Allocation for eligible operating expensesLesser of item 4 and (item 5.11 + item 8)Transfer to Schedule 3A item 1.3 col. 11, and Schedule 5.1 item 2.5.1 col. 6			838,666
10	RNEF - Maximum amount available for capital expendituresItem 4 less item 9			0
11	RNEF - Capital expendituresSchedule 3, item 1.8.4, col. 11			-
12	RNEF - Transfer to DCC for eligible capital expendituresLesser of item 10 and item 11Transfer to Schedule 5.1 item 2.5.1 col. 5			0
13	RNEF - Remaining allocation at August 31Item 10 less item 12			0