



March 22, 2022

Jessica Johnson

Dear Ms. Johnson,

On behalf of Elgin County Council, I would like to thank you for your correspondence regarding the draft Rural Education Task Force report. Council wants you to know that we have heard your concerns and the concerns of many other Elgin County residents regarding the equitable treatment of rural schools. We also recognize the desire to have the draft Rural Education Task Force report considered by the Thames Valley District School Board in a timely manner.

The County of Elgin was grateful for the opportunity to preview the draft Rural Education Task Force report at the March 8, 2022 County Council meeting. Council voted to receive and file the report and eagerly looks forward to receiving the final Rural Education Task Force report from the Thames Valley District School Board.

The County of Elgin is deeply committed to the support and preservation of rural schools. The role that these schools play in the continued vitality and viability of rural life is critical. Not only do these schools allow for rural students to access quality education within their own communities, but they act as important hubs for community activity. When essential funding for rural schools is cut, or rural schools are closed, our communities are impacted negatively.

Over the past several years, the County of Elgin has engaged in considerable school retention and advocacy efforts including, but not limited to, advocating for the preservation of rural schools, reviewing new provincial policies and guidelines related to rural schools, meeting annually with both the Thames Valley District School Board and the London District Catholic School Board to discuss resident concerns, adopting a School Retention Plan, appointing a Council Member to sit on the Rural Education Task Force, and most recently, supporting a resolution to designate the Middlesex County a low population municipality which would allow the municipality to retain two (2) positions on the Thames Valley District School Board.

The County of Elgin is committed to meaningful actions that will ensure our students receive the best education possible and our advocacy efforts in this area will continue as long as necessary.



Sincerely,

*Mary French*

Warden Mary French

Cc Ms. Lori-Ann Pizzolato, Chair of the TVDSB

Warden Martin and Oxford County Council

Warden Warwick and Middlesex County Council