
May 18, 2022

Dear Provincial Electoral Candidate/Member of Provincial Parliament,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB), I would like to take this opportunity to bring awareness to three critical matters of concern impacting the SCDSB. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) has declared May 18 Education Day in the province of Ontario. As a Board of Trustees, we feel it is prudent to inform Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) candidates, on Education Day, of the significant pressures the SCDSB is facing that have a direct impact on students and the constituents within your ridings.

1. **Accommodation Pressures**

Simcoe County's population continues to grow at a rapid pace. With this growth comes the necessity to accommodate students in our existing public schools which, in many cases, are already over-crowded facilities.

On February 25, 2022, the SCDSB submitted business cases to the Ministry of Education under the Capital Priorities Grant program. Under the 2022-2023 Capital Priorities Program, business cases could include up to five requests for funding to support new school space construction, as well as the creation of new or renovated licensed child care spaces in schools. To address the board's most urgent and pressing accommodation pressures, the SCDSB's 2022-2023 submission included a request for the following:

- **New Angus elementary school – growth accommodation**
New residential growth in the Angus area has been steadily increasing and is projected to continue. Currently, the elementary schools in the community are over capacity and projected to remain so over the long term, increasing reliance on portable classroom accommodation. Pine River Elementary School is a 234-pupil place school with a current enrolment of 400 students, putting the school at 71% over capacity. Angus Morrison Public School is a 458-pupil place school with a current enrolment of 732 students, putting the school at 60% over capacity.
- **New Alliston elementary school – growth accommodation**
New residential growth in the Alliston area has been steadily increasing and is projected to continue. Currently, the elementary schools in the community are over capacity and projected to remain so over the long-term, increasing reliance on portable classroom accommodation. Alliston Union Public School is a 507-pupil place school with a current enrolment of 596 students, putting the school at 18% over capacity. Boyne River Public School is a 461-pupil place school with a current enrolment of 705 students, putting the school at 53% over capacity. Ernest Cumberland Elementary School is a 539-pupil place school with a current enrolment of 617 students, putting the school at 14% over capacity.

- **New Bradford secondary school – growth accommodation**
Bradford and the surrounding area have experienced significant growth in the elementary panel over the past seven years. This enrolment is beginning to translate into the secondary panel. Currently, the elementary and secondary schools in the community are over capacity and projected to remain so over the long term, increasing reliance on portable classroom accommodation. To address this growth, a new Bradford secondary school will be needed within a five-year period. Bradford District High School is a 1,113-pupil place school with a current enrolment of 1,247 students, putting the school at 12% over capacity.
- **Nantyr Shores Secondary School – growth accommodation addition**
The SCDSB requested a two-story addition at Nantyr Shores Secondary School to accommodate the continued enrolment growth in the elementary panel. Currently, Nantyr Shores Secondary School is a 1,152-pupil place school with a current enrolment of 1,336 students, putting the school at 16% over capacity. An addition at Nantyr Shores Secondary School would provide 414 additional pupil places in the school.
- **Ardagh Bluffs Public School – growth accommodation addition**
The SCDSB requested an addition at Ardagh Bluffs Public School to accommodate the residential development in the area. It is estimated that the residential development will generate approximately 450 students. In 2010, Ardagh Bluffs Public School was built with the capacity to accept a vertical addition. Currently, Ardagh Bluffs Public School is a 576 pupil place school with a current enrolment of 697 students, putting the school at 21% over capacity. An addition at Ardagh Bluffs Public School would provide 138 additional pupil places in the school.

On May 2, 2022, the SCDSB was informed by the Minister's office that the Ministry of Education did not approve funding for any of the projects submitted through the 2022-2023 Capital Priorities Program. The Minister's office cited significant demand for funding as the rationale for this decision. Although the SCDSB has received \$124.5 million for over 12 projects since 2016, the lack of funding from the Ministry of Education for capital priorities this year results in continued pressure on operations including:

- increased requirements for temporary accommodations/portables for students;
- increased transportation costs and increased travel time as students are transported out of area to be accommodated at alternative school sites; and
- the need to implement and potentially execute contingency plans as outlined in the SCDSB's [2022-2023 Accommodation Plan](#).

2. Educational Development Charges

An Educational Development Charge (EDC) is a way for school boards to collect funds from new growth-related development to purchase land for new schools and to pay for site work required to prepare to build. EDC funds are used exclusively for school site acquisition and preparation. Municipal development charges fund growth-related infrastructure and services such as roads, sewers, policing, libraries, fire, transit and other public service.

In 2018, the SCDSB conducted an EDC Background Study with proposed EDC rates of \$3,578 per residential dwelling unit at \$0.97 per square foot of non-residential gross floor area. Later that year, the Ministry of Education modified legislation that governs EDCs and issued an amended regulation that froze EDCs at rates that were in effect on August 31, 2018. Further, in 2019, the Ministry of Education issued another amended

regulation that placed a limit on the rate of increase the SCDSB can place on EDCs. With the current restrictions in place, the SCDSB is not able to collect adequate funds from developers as the growth continues in Simcoe County. Over the past four years, due to the Ministry of Education rate freeze, the SCDSB has a collection shortfall of close to \$21 million in revenue that would have been utilized for site acquisition and related costs.

With the identified needs, increased land values and increased barriers to site acquisitions and municipal and planning approvals, the SCDSB is concerned that the current restrictions will result in extensive EDC deficits and delays in the development of new schools needed to support population growth in Simcoe County.

3. Transportation

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC) provides transportation services for approximately 26,000 students enrolled in SCDSB schools. Although the SCSTC has been successful in identifying and implementing cost saving measures, the cost of transporting students continues to put significant financial strain on the SCDSB. The Ministry of Education transportation funding model has been under review since 2017. The current funding model is inadequate and has not kept up with the increasing costs associated with transportation.

The SCDSB is projected to receive \$21.9 million in transportation funding for the 2022-2023 school year, resulting in a shortfall of \$700,000. This will require the SCDSB to access funds designated for student programming in order to meet the transportation needs of the board. This annual deficit will continue to increase due to the accommodation pressures the board is experiencing.

The combined impact of accommodation pressures, freeze on EDCs and inadequate transportation funding directly affects the students and families within the SCDSB. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we respectfully request the support and advocacy of our provincial candidates in Simcoe County to bring awareness to the issues impacting the SCDSB and the constituents within your ridings.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss these issues in further detail, please contact Board Chairperson, Jodi Lloyd, at jlloyd@trustee.scdsb.on.ca or your [local SCDSB trustee](#):

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Sincerely,



Jodi Lloyd
Chairperson
Simcoe County District School Board

- c. Board of Trustees, SCDSB
John Dance, Director of Education, SCDSB
Corry Van Nispen, Superintendent of Business and Facility Services, SCDSB