

# Delegation to the Township of Huron-Kinloss

April 8, 2026

**Re: Bluewater District School Board Correspondence – Review and Formal Consultation on the Removal of Trustees**

Good evening Mayor Murray and Members of Council,

My name is **Jan Johnstone**. I serve as **Vice Chair of the Bluewater District School Board** and as the **English-language public school trustee representing the Municipality of Kincardine and the Township of Huron-Kinloss**.

I have had the privilege of serving as an elected trustee for more than 20 years. My three daughters attended school in Ripley, and like many local families, I carry strong and positive memories of their elementary school experience.

In addition to my local role, I also serve as **First Vice-President of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)**. OPSBA represents **31 English-language public district school boards and 10 public school authorities** across Ontario, serving nearly **1.4 million students** — approximately **two-thirds of students in Ontario's publicly funded education system**. OPSBA is a key advocacy voice for English public education and, under the **Education Act**, the provincial government is required to consult with OPSBA regarding legislation affecting public education.

I am here this evening to respectfully request Council's support.

Specifically:

- **That the correspondence received from the Bluewater District School Board regarding the review and formal consultation on the removal of trustees be received for information; and**
- **That the Township of Huron-Kinloss write a letter supporting the continuation of elected school board trustees and requesting a province-wide public consultation process before any decision is made to remove them, with copies sent to the Minister of Education, the MPP for Huron-Bruce, and AMO.**

On February 20, 2026, your Municipal Clerk received correspondence from **Bluewater District School Board Chair Jane Thomson and Vice-Chair Jan Johnstone** for distribution to Mayor and Council.

This correspondence included:

- a letter to the **Ontario Ombudsman** requesting review of the potential impacts of removing English-language public school trustees; and
- a letter to the **Minister of Education** requesting a formal province-wide consultation process before any such decision is considered.

Trustees are the only locally elected representatives within Ontario's public education system. They provide accountability between provincial policy decisions and local community realities and ensure rural municipal voices are represented in education decision-making.

Municipal councils across the region have already recognized the importance of this issue. **Grey County Council**, the **Town of Saugeen Shores**, and the **Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula** have passed resolutions supporting the continuation of elected trustees and requesting consultation prior to any governance changes. Many additional municipalities across Ontario — particularly in rural and northern communities — are taking similar action.

Ontario's Minister of Education has recently suggested that current school board governance structures may be "outdated." I respectfully disagree. Local democratic representation is not outdated, particularly in rural communities such as the Township of Huron-Kinloss.

Elected trustees help ensure:

- open meetings
- transparent budgets
- local accountability
- and direct representation for families and communities

Trustees understand firsthand the importance of rural transportation realities, sustaining community schools, supporting access to skilled trades programming, and ensuring families have a local advocate within the education system.

Removing elected trustees would eliminate the only direct local democratic voice within Ontario's public education governance structure.

Meaningful consultation with municipalities and communities must occur before any such changes are considered.

Your support would help ensure rural perspectives are included in this important provincial discussion.

Thank you for your leadership and service to the residents of Huron-Kinloss. I would be pleased to answer any questions.