

Terms of Reference for Minister's Reference Group on Community and Education Planning and Partnerships

Policy Context

As part of the province's Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education the ministry committed to support improved co-ordination of community infrastructure planning among school boards, municipalities and community partners. This commitment includes:

- Revising the ministry's Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG)
- Strengthening the ministry's Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG)
- Supporting the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' ongoing integrated local planning work; and
- Supporting the Ministry of Infrastructure to deliver recommendations in *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan*.

The Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education responds to feedback received during the government's rural engagement in spring 2017 and aims to better support:

- Quality rural and northern education;
- Sustainable use of school space in rural and northern communities; and
- Decision-making around school closures.

Mandate

The mandate of the Minister's Reference Group on Community and Education Planning and Partnerships will be to advise the Minister of Education on effective ways to improve co-ordination of community infrastructure planning from a public education perspective (that is, including school boards and child care providers).

The Minister's Reference Group will achieve this by providing advice to the Minister of Education on the following four work streams arising from the Plan to Strengthen Rural and Northern Education:

- Better facilitation of local relationships and partnerships, including between school boards and municipal governments, by building upon the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' ongoing integrated local planning work, particularly in rural and northern communities.
- Supporting delivery of all relevant recommendations in *Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan*.
- Strengthening the ministry's Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline (CPPG) in order to:
 - Better align with integrated local planning processes;

- Encourage joint responsibility for integrated community planning, with a focus on communication between school boards, municipal governments and community partners about boards' capital plans; and
- Highlight the potential for community use of open and underutilized schools.
- Revising its Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) to promote inclusion of community impact alongside the focus on student achievement and well-being.

Members of the reference group will have no formal accountabilities, and will not be required to achieve consensus.

Membership

The Minister's Reference Group will include either staff or political representatives from the following organisations:

- Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE – English Public, English Catholic, French) – 1 Representative Each
- School Board Trustee Associations (OPSBA, OCSTA, ACEPO, AFOCSC) – 1 Representative Each
- Student representatives (OSTA & RECFO) – 1 Representative Each
- People for Education – 1 Representative
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) – 1 Representative
- AMO Warden Caucuses (Eastern & Western) – 1 Representative Each
- Community Schools Alliance – 1 Representative
- Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) – 1 Representative
- Northern Municipalities Representative (FONOM & NOMA) – 1 Representative Each
- Large Urban Municipalities Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO) – 1 Representative
- Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) – 1 Representative
- Academic with community planning expertise

Administration

The Reference Group will meet once during each of the consultation phases which are currently scheduled to occur during October to November 2017 and mid-January to mid-February 2018. These dates are tentative and subject to change.

Reference Group members are requested to attend meetings in-person, where possible. Substitutes will not be permitted.

Meetings will be in-person where possible in proximity to 900 Bay Street in Toronto, and teleconference will be made available when necessary.

Best efforts will be made to circulate any required materials with Reference Group members one week in advance of a scheduled meeting.

Additional background information about relevant government initiatives which include, but are not limited to, community hubs and integrated local planning will also be provided to Reference Group members in advance of the scheduled meetings.

Expenses

Members will receive no remuneration.

Members will be reimbursed for their travel and accommodation expenses as per the Ontario Public Service Travel, Meal, and Hospitality Expenses Directive. Copies of the expense reimbursement criteria will be provided to members along with required claim forms.

Confidentiality

The Ministry of Education is subject to Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), which may be amended from time to time. Subject to the FIPPA access provisions, all records and information arising from the business of the Minister's Reference Group will be confidential. Subject to FIPPA, all advice, recommendations, findings, and reports from the Minister's Reference Group will remain confidential until such time as the Ministry of Education chooses to release them.

In accepting the Minister's Reference Group membership, members agree to sign a confidentiality agreement ensuring that they will not disclose or give to any person, without the Ministry of Education's authorization, any information, document or record that comes to their knowledge or possession by reason of being an Minister's Reference Group member.

Conflict of Interest

Members must not use information obtained as a result of their involvement with the Minister's Reference Group for personal benefit, and must report all potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

Note that the Minister's Reference Group is not a forum for members to lobby on behalf of their association(s) and/or school board(s)/CMSM(s)/DSSAB(s).