



Mark Fisher, Director of Education and Secretary

August 25, 2022

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Via email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Lecce:

The Thames Valley District School Board is the fourth largest school board in Ontario, with more than 80,000 students and an area of over 7,000km². Our school board continues to grow at a considerable rate due to the rapid migration of families to the City of London, the City of St. Thomas and Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford Counties.

As we strive to accommodate skyrocketing enrolment and provide our students with quality learning spaces, we are faced with a number of funding and timeline challenges. We are hopeful that these challenges can be addressed with your support.

The first of these challenges is the limitations of current capital benchmark funding. According to findings from the Operations, Maintenance & Construction Committee (OMC) of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO), there is an average gap of approximately 18% between cost estimates and tender price for new schools tendered from 2015 to 2018. Increased capital benchmark funding would allow for more realistic budgets for new capital projects moving forward.

Another difficulty we face as a board is a substantial capital backlog of \$694,156,214, projected to reach \$912,786,055 over the next five years. Increased funding for the School Condition Improvement (SCI) and School Renewal Allocation (SRA) grants would assist in alleviating this significant backlog so that we can ensure students are learning in well-maintained environments.

Approval timelines also present a challenge for our board as enrolment growth outpaces the speed at which we can secure approvals for new schools and build much-needed student accommodations. With current timelines and the frequent need to submit business cases multiple times through various rounds of the Capital Priorities Program prior to receiving approval, our board has now begun to consider portable placements from the start of the design process for new schools as we anticipate the need for portables upon the school's opening. This is a significant concern for our communities.

Thames Valley District School Board - Office of the Chairperson

1250 Dundas Street, London, Ontario, N5W 5P2 Tel: 519-452-2000 Fax: 519-452-2396 website: www.tvdsb.ca

We build each student's tomorrow, every day.



Mark Fisher, Director of Education and Secretary

On behalf of the Trustees of the Thames Valley District School Board, I ask that you please consider the following actions to ensure the timely, cost-effective construction of quality schools for our students:

1. Increase capital benchmark funding for building of new schools, additions and other repairs;
2. Increase funding to the School Condition Improvement (SCI) and School Renewal Allocation (SRA) grants to reduce TVDSB's capital backlog which presently is at \$694,156,214 and is forecasted to increase to \$912,786,055 over the next five years;
3. Shorten approval timelines for business cases submitted through the Capital Priorities Program and the construction approval process for new schools.

As Trustees this would assist our communities by ensuring our students have the facilities, they need for an optional learning environment as enrolment increases. Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "L. Pizzolato".

Lori-Ann Pizzolato
Chair of the Board
Thames Valley District School Board

cc: Trustees
Mark Fisher, Director of Education