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March 20th, 2026

**Mr. A. Poirier, Mayor
Councillors – City of Kenora**

Subject: Protecting Local Voice in Public Education

Dear Mayor Poirier and Councillors,

We are writing as elected school board trustees for the Kenora/Sioux Narrows attendance area for the Keewatin Patricia District School Board (KPDSB) to respectfully request Kenora Council's support in reaffirming the essential role of locally elected public school trustees as the primary community voice in public education.

There are proposals by the Minister of Education to drastically change or eliminate locally elected English public school trustees in Ontario. The Minister has described current school board governance as "outdated." We strongly disagree. Local democratic representation is not outdated, especially in remote communities like ours.

Communities in the KPDSB area, including Kenora, Sioux Narrows, Minaki, Redditt and surrounding unorganized townships, and our First Nation partners deserve a direct say in shaping the schools that shape our children. Elected trustees ensure open meetings, transparent budgets, and visible accountability. Removing trustees would silence the only direct, elected voice families currently have, shifting decisions entirely to Queen's Park.

Trustees are your neighbours and local champions. We understand local priorities firsthand — from long bus routes and the importance of small community schools to expanding skilled trades and experiential learning. We are often the first point of contact for families seeking help or advocacy. Eliminating trustees would not reduce complexity; it would shift it to MPP or municipal offices. The loss of local voice is felt most deeply in rural and northern communities. Trustees identify transportation gaps, enrolment pressures, and facility challenges early, helping prevent costly crises and ensuring provincial policy works in local reality.

We respectfully request your support as many local municipal leaders around the province are doing.

- Sign or initiate a joint letter of support and send it to the Minister of Education and the Premier
- Share these concerns with provincial decision-makers
- Send your letter of support to ROMA and AMO
- Speak publicly in favour of maintaining elected public school trustees
- Consider placing this matter on the agenda at your next council meeting

For your convenience, here is a sample council motion you could use:

- WHEREAS locally elected trustees provide essential community representation;

At KPDSB, all will feel... valued, trusted, hopeful and capable
WWW.KPDSB.CA

- AND WHEREAS rural and northern communities rely on trustees to reflect local priorities, ensure accountability, and advocate for students;
- AND WHEREAS proposed changes may reduce or eliminate locally elected trustees;
- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council affirms support for maintaining elected trustees;
- AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor/Clerk send a joint letter to the Minister of Education and the Premier, with copies to OPSBA, ROMA, AMO, and MPP Greg Rickford, asking for a government pause on this issue and asking the government to commit to a full-scale, transparent, and province-wide consultation on school board governance models.

Our education system is strongest when it reflects the communities it serves. Protecting the role of elected trustees protects that strength for future generations.

Thank you for your service to our community. we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue and its local impacts.

Sincerely,



David Cornish

per Rory McMillan

per Teika Newton

David Cornish

Rory McMillan

Teika Newton

Trustees for the Kenora/Sioux Narrows Attendance Area of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board

For more information, please visit: www.democracyisnotoutdated.ca

Cc: Roger Griffiths, Chair
Keewatin-Patricia District School Board