

June 29, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

At its meeting on June 14, 2021, the Board of Trustees for the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) agreed to write to you to reiterate the need for an extension of the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) project completion deadlines and to stress the importance and urgency of this decision.

On February 23, 2021 the Federal Government approved a total of \$26,231,600 in CVRIS funding for the Waterloo Region District School Board. Since that official announcement, staff have worked diligently to tender projects in an effort to complete this large amount of capital work, in addition to planned school renewal and school condition improvement projects.

Due to extremely tight timelines and increasingly challenging market conditions, response to recent tenders has been limited and many bids are significantly over the initial cost estimates. As a result, some projects have been deferred to 2022, pending the extension of funding timelines.

Minister, we all share the mutual goal of improving the infrastructure in our schools. Given the substantial amount of the CVRIS funding, combined with the market conditions, we ask you to extend the project completion deadlines so this funding can be utilized to its fullest extent; thereby improving the conditions within our schools and the well-being of our students.

We are aware of and would like to amplify the calls from the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and the Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO) on behalf of school boards, also advocating for an extension to project completion deadlines and the urgency to make this decision.

As we continue to navigate through the pandemic, it has become clear it is critical to improve the infrastructure in our schools, particularly that which relates to ventilation. We ask you to extend the CVRIS completion deadline, allowing us to complete these projects and greatly improve the health and safety of our students' learning environments.

Sincerely,



Joanne Weston

Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

CC:

MP Honourable Catherine McKenna

MP Honourable Bardish Chagger

MP Bryan May

MP Raj Saini

MP Marwan Tabbara

MP Tim Louis

MPP Belinda Karahalios

MPP Laura Mae Lindo

MPP Amy Fee

MPP Michael Harris

MPP Catherine Fife

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Ontario Public School Boards

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