



**ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION**

Leading Education's Advocates

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Cathy Abraham
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Thursday, December 12, 2019

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), I feel compelled to write this letter regarding the recent changes to regulations regarding Education Development Charges (EDCs). The November 8 memo outlined amendments to the governing regulation with changes to the EDC Rate Restrictions, Alternative Project and Localized Education Development Agreements (LEDA), as well EDC Rate Calculations exemptions. We had initially commented on proposed regulation changes in our October 3 letter that also supported the feedback from our member board financial and technical expertise group, the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO).

Currently there are several member boards that are able to qualify for EDCs, and the changes announced supporting alternative projects and LEDAs are welcomed by those boards. This demonstrates to us that the government is willing to allow for greater local flexibility to meet today's planning needs. We understand there may be guidance and support given to boards by ministry staff to allow time for local board by-laws to be updated to reflect these new changes. Sector-wide communication about this would be appreciated.

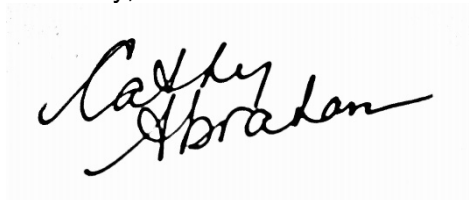
However, we were disappointed that the EDC rates for both residential and non-residential developments were not increased. The rates do not reflect the actual cost of land and therefore other funds are required to be used and/or deficit funding in this area is the result. This in turn, becomes a larger budget issue for boards and will be also part of our education funding submission.

We were disappointed that the regulation was not changed to allow those of our member boards that have areas of growth to qualify for EDCs. These boards technically do have excess space district-wide, but not always in areas where they need community schools. This is particularly acute in our largest urban centres. We are also concerned that there is an exemption given to private schools regarding EDCs and would like to know the rationale behind this as it sends a very worrisome signal to the public education system.

Finally, in order for boards to continue to be strong stewards of public dollars, the pupil accommodation review guidelines need to be released and the moratorium on school reviews lifted.

In closing, we would like to continue this discussion about EDC flexibility and the possibility for further changes to the regulation. In the meantime, we ask the Ministry of Education to coordinate communications to our sector with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to ensure all stakeholders are on the same page.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy Abraham
President
Ontario Public School Boards' Association

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association represents English public district school boards and public school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million public elementary and secondary students. The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. OPSBA is seen as the credible voice of public education in Ontario and is routinely called on by the provincial government for input and advice on legislation and the impact of government policy directions.