



March 13, 2017

Mark Liguori  
Superintendent  
Elk Island Public Schools  
683 Wye Road  
Sherwood Park, AB T8B 1N2

Dear Mr. Liguori:

**Re: Potential Ministik School Closure**

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On behalf of Strathcona County, thank you for your letter of January 17<sup>th</sup> and the opportunity to provide comments on the future of a rural Strathcona County school.

We understand that the Board is actively encouraging comments from the public and stakeholders. Strathcona County has been receiving submissions from our rural residents and their families to Elk Island Public Schools in support of Ministik School. We have responded openly that the decision rests with the School Board and the Government of Alberta. We do understand their passion, as do you, in support of their school.

We appreciate your efforts to weigh all factors before the Board makes its decision on such an important matter that will impact a large part of your jurisdiction, and ours. As a municipality, our particular observations around Ministik center around community inclusiveness and cohesion; growth into the future; responsible use of resources; maximization of current infrastructure.

The decision before the Board is very important to many Strathcona County residents who are past, current or future Ministik School users. You have to weigh many factors in your decision-making process. We ask you to consider the following in your decision matrix:

**Community inclusiveness cohesion**

Rural areas have fewer places to connect residents together and build a sense of community. Ministik School as a public building has provided community programming and events beyond its educational core service throughout its history. We remain confident that the educational needs of rural Strathcona County residents will be your primary focus. We ask that you also consider during your deliberations the importance of community connectivity to their social health.

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**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER**

2001 Sherwood Drive  
Sherwood Park, Alberta, T8A 3W7

780-464-8100 F: 780-464-8051  
[www.strathcona.ca](http://www.strathcona.ca)

**Growth into the future**

Ministik School serves a particularly large catchment basin of rural Strathcona County, encompassing one of our three growth Hamlets. The latest Stats Canada reports speak to the continual growth in our province and in our region. With this in mind, the County is currently putting a significant amount of work into an update of our Municipal Development Plan. We trust Elk Island Public Schools is also keeping a longer-term focus when considering the future of this important community resource.


**Responsible use of resources and maximization of current infrastructure**

The school division has committed substantial resources in putting together excellent leaders and educators at Ministik School over the years. These efforts have obviously enhanced the success of the school, increased registration and instilled a deep loyalty within rural Strathcona County for the school's leadership, teachers and programming.

We also know that you have made significant investments in this school and the surrounding infrastructure over the years to address safety concerns and highway access. We understand that the Government of Alberta approved funding for the replacement of portables for Ministik School as this speaks to the support your Board has for maintaining and building on to existing infrastructure.

As always, Strathcona County is pleased to work collaboratively with Elk Island Public Schools and representatives of the Province to meet the needs of people who live in Strathcona County.

Sincerely,



Rob Coon  
Chief Commissioner  
STRATHCONA COUNTY

cc: Strathcona County Councillors  
Estefania Cortes-Vargas, MLA