

The Honourable Adriana LaGrange  
228 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB  
Canada T5K 2B6

Ms. Jackie Lovely MLA,  
Constituency Office  
4870 - 51 Street  
Camrose, AB  
Canada T4V 1S1

April 7, 2020

Dear Minister and MLA,

Given recent decisions by the Battle River School Division (BRSD) to close Holden and Hardisty Schools and remove High School from Ryley, the Village of Ryley would like to express extreme disappointment that they did not appear to consider your recent budget in their decisions, let alone demonstrate any interest in "working with their communities" to "explore all options" as they claim.

Ryley is convinced that the BRSD model of consolidating to save money is a spiraling enterprise that directly contributes to the shrinking rural population. Withdrawing schools from communities leads to less municipal and community sources for cooperative support for the BRSD and places more pressure on families, which in turn leads those families to make difficult choices. Families are forced to move to urban centers and smaller communities become less viable. This leads to the BRSD consolidating again, thus fuelling the shrinking rural population. Fundamental to this model is BRSD naïve and sole reliance on Provincial funding and disregard for the potential of working with more rural communities to discover innovative solutions with families and communities who are otherwise very motivated to work toward maintaining their rural lifestyle: solutions which would in turn build less pressure on Provincial funding.

Ryley feels that Rural Education needs a new management model that would maximize the available resources provided by the Province and does not feel that the BRSD is motivated to consider such. Ryley is disappointed that the BRSD could not reconcile their finances to deliver High School in central Beaver County or maintain schools in Hardisty and Holden. Ryley is particularly concerned that the BRSD Policy 15 identifies 26 of their 36 (72.2%) schools for closure consideration because of the enrolment thresholds that the BRSD has established. This is now worse at 25 of 34 (74.5%) after these closures. Holden was not even below threshold.

Ryley is committed to serving its community and this commitment competes with the priorities of the BRSD. As we are convinced there are better solutions and that there is a significant gap between what our community needs and what the BRSD can provide, Ryley will now engage its citizens to learn what our community wants for the delivery of High School for their children.

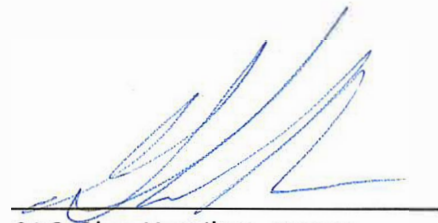
As our community embarks on this journey, we are confident that we will not be able to implement a solution in time for this coming September 2020. Therefore, Ryley requests ministerial assistance in establishing a one-year moratorium on the BRSD decision of moving high school students (Gr 10-12) out of Ryley for the 2020/2021 academic year.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mayor Terry Magneson



CAO Glen Hamilton-Brown

The Municipality of The Village of Ryley