

Counties hosting Rural Education Symposium Feb. 3

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11, 2022

THE COUNTIES, Ontario - The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry will host a rural education symposium "Education Equity for Rural Students" on Feb. 3, 2022, highlighting important issues facing rural education throughout Ontario.

Informative presentations will be delivered in English to address details and recommendations contained in a recently completed report entitled "Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry", which was prepared by Horizon Educational Consultants of Ottawa.



This free event will be held virtually via Zoom and livestreamed to the public on SDG's YouTube channel, starting at 9 a.m. and wrapping up at 12:30 p.m.

"We encourage everyone interested in education for our children to take this opportunity to find out more and advocate for the changes necessary to ensure that Ontario's educational system is equitable for all students," said United Counties of SDG CAO Tim Simpson.

Following the presentations, Paul Bennett, author and Director of the Schoolhouse Institute and Adjunct Professor of Education at Dalhousie University, will provide a keynote address highlighting rural education issues. The day will conclude with a roundtable discussion involving the presenters and keynote speaker. Erik Lockhart of Queen's University will facilitate the symposium and moderate the proceedings.

The Counties has prepared an expansive list of invitations for like-minded organizations, experts and individuals of influence to take part in the symposium. The invite list includes Ontario Education Minister Stephen Lecce.

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“We want to ensure we cast a wide net, as we know education – in particular the challenges of rural education – is a concern for students, parents and others across Ontario,” said SDG Coun. Kirsten Gardner, who along with Coun. Stephanie Jaworski will provide a presentation during the symposium.

“Rural students can often find themselves in challenging scenarios related to connectivity, transportation and school amalgamation,” said Jaworski. “These challenges are common right across Ontario.”

More information on the Counties’ report “*Improving Rural Education in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry*” can be found at this link: sdgcounties.ca/rural-education-report

Symposium YouTube stream: bit.ly/3faFU3c

SYMPOSIUM AGENDA

- 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. - Opening remarks - Warden Carma Williams, United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and Erik Lockhart, Queen’s University
- 9:15 – 9:45 a.m. – “Improving Rural Education” presented by SDG Counties Councillor Kirsten Gardner and Stephanie Jaworski
- 9:45 – 10:15 a.m. – “Exploring the Social and Economic Impact of Schools in Small Ontario Communities - A Research Report from the Community Schools Alliance” and “2018 Ontario Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline” presented by Marcus Ryan and Doug Reycraft of the Community Schools Alliance
- 10:15 – 10:30 a.m. – Break
- 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. – “Rural Education Task Force: A Conversation About Rural Schools” presented by Arlene Morell of the Thames Valley District School Board
- 11:00 – 11:45 a.m. – Keynote address “Pathway to Community Revitalization: School Closures, Rural Resistance and the Promise of Community Hub Schools” presented by Paul Bennett, Director of the Schoolhouse Institute and Adjunct Professor of Education at Saint Mary’s University
- 11:45 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. – Roundtable discussion and session wrap up facilitated by Erik Lockhart of Queen’s University
- 12:30 p.m. - Closing remarks from Warden Carma Williams

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