

## Hastings Highlands wants to connect with school board

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board has received more than \$600,000 from the province.

A letter presented to Hastings Highlands council Oct. 18 from Minister of Education, Mitzie Hunter, to CAO Pat Pilgrim, announced the board received \$609,395 through the Rural and Northern Education Fund.

The letter outlines the funding will be used for programming and support services in eligible rural schools, operations, and enhancing student transportation options such as late bus runs and mobile learning through tablets or Wi-Fi.

Communications officer for the board Kerry Donnell confirmed the board had received the funding.

HPEDSB has allocated \$100,000 from the \$609,395 to support school budgets at eligible northern and rural schools, she said.

The remaining funds will support school operations at those schools.

Each Bancroft area school had been selected for the supportive funding, said Donnell, including Hastings Highlands's Maynooth Public School and Bird's Creek Public School. She said all boards are required to report how the funds are spent by the end of the 2017-'18 school year.

The minister's letter to the municipality goes on to state the money will be used at the discretion of the board but that the minister trusts the board will work with the Municipality of Hastings Highlands and community members before making decisions that impact students.

Councillor Alex Walder motioned to write a letter in response to the minister.

The letter to board chair, Lucile Kyle (our local trustee) and to director of education, Mandy Savery-Whiteway will assure them that the Municipality of Hastings Highlands and its community are ready to work with the board of education to meet the minister's stated desire for collaborative decision making that will impact [our] students, Walder later wrote to *Bancroft This Week*.

The paper asked Donnell if the board would be open to consultations with the municipality. She replied that it was her understanding that the funds [had] been allocated already.

I'm interested in improving the educational experience of all students, everywhere, but my mandate is to advocate on behalf of Bird's Creek Public School and Maynooth Public School, the two schools in Hastings Highlands, said Walder. I'm sure the councils and communities of Wollaston and Bancroft will do the same.