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October 25, 2021

Advocacy Update: Municipal and School Board Election Day 2022

We recognize the efforts of our members who are working to partner with local schools to ease the facilitation of Municipal and School Board Election Day. We know that while legislation allows the Clerk to use schools as polling stations, getting the support of local principals is difficult. We also know that members have been engaging their local school boards in school-year calendar planning discussions to encourage boards to schedule a Professional Development (PD) Day on Municipal and School Board Election Day.

It is not an impossible task, however, not all boards are willing to support these efforts. That is why in successive submissions on amendments to the *Municipal Elections Act*, we have requested that the Province mandate a Province-wide PD Day.

In an effort to find an interim 'non-legislative' solution to this problem and to support existing local efforts, we have also sent a **letter** to school boards across the province formally requesting that school boards schedule a PD Day on Municipal Election Day – October 24, 2022.

Some key messages we shared with boards that you can also use to support your local efforts, include:

- In 2018, about 25% of school boards agreed to make Municipal Election Day a PD Day.
- Approximately, another 60% had PD days in October and almost 30% had days within a week of municipal election day.
- There are a number of school boards that schedule PD Days on Mondays for other purposes.
- By working together, we can increase these rates and make it easier for local voters to cast their ballots while ensuring student safety.
- Scheduling a PD Day on Municipal and School Board Election Day would:
 - Ease the facilitation of Election Day so that municipal clerks can ensure a smooth democratic process which elects school board trustees as well as members of local council.
 - Enhance the principle of safe schools for both students and teachers by reducing the number of people in the school.
 - Provide voters with a large, accessible location to cast their votes for their school board and municipal representatives while ensuring public health promotion and protection through more adequate physical distancing.
- The benefits of scheduling a PD Day on Municipal and School Board Election Day serves to enhance citizen engagement often at little to no cost to the school boards themselves.
- Collaboration between public or separate school boards to schedule a PD Day on municipal and school board election day will also assist the board in planning student transportation services.

To assist your efforts, we have also developed a Council Resolution template that can be adapted to suit your own municipality's needs. As some have done previously, these resolutions can be forwarded to your local school boards, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Education.

DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE

We will continue to assess other opportunities to pursue this non-legislative advocacy and will once again request that the Province mandate a PD day in our next submission on the *Municipal Elections Act*.

For more information or questions, please contact::

Alana Del Greco

Manager, Policy & Government Relations

adelgreco@amcto.com

Charlotte Caza

Policy Advisor

ccaaza@amcto.com



AMCTO | The Municipal Experts

2680 Skymark Avenue, Suite 610, Mississauga, Ontario L4W 5L6

Tel: (905) 602-4294 | Fax: (905) 602-4295

www.amcto.com

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Dear Chair of the Board and Director of Education:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) in regards to scheduling Professional Development/Activities Days (PD Day hereafter) on Monday, October 24th, 2022 – Municipal and School Board Election Day – to facilitate an accessible and smooth electoral process for school board electors.

AMCTO represents excellence in local government management and leadership. With more than 2,000 members working in municipalities across Ontario, AMCTO is Ontario's largest voluntary association of local government professionals, and the leading professional development organization for municipal professionals.

As you may be aware, our municipal clerk members administer school board elections and they are in the midst of planning and preparing for the election in 2022. Municipalities have statutory authority to use schools as polling places under section 45 of the *Municipal Election Act, 1996*. However, municipal clerks often face challenges in gaining the support of local principals to provide their facilities as voting locations for this important democratic process.

Many school boards across the Province already work with municipalities to schedule a PD Day on municipal election day every four years. In fact, in 2018, 25% of school boards agreed to make Municipal Election Day a PD Day. Another 60% had PD days in October and almost 30% had days within a week of municipal election day. We understand that there are also a number of school boards that schedule PD Days on Mondays for other purposes. Together, we can increase these rates and make it easier for local voters to cast their ballots while ensuring student safety.

Partnering with municipalities once every four years to ensure that municipal and school board elections fall on a PD Day has a number of benefits to you, your schools and the broader community.

Scheduling a PD Day on municipal and school board election day would:

- Ease the facilitation of Election Day so that municipal clerks can ensure a smooth democratic process which elects school board trustees as well as members of local council.
- Enhance the principle of safe schools for both students and teachers by reducing the number of people in the school.
- Provide voters with a large, accessible location to cast their votes for their school board and municipal representatives while ensuring public health promotion and protection through more adequate physical distancing.

These benefits serve to enhance citizen engagement often at little to no cost to the school boards themselves.

Moreover, working with your public or separate school board colleagues to schedule a PD Day on municipal and school board election day will also assist your board in planning student transportation services in instances where you may collaborate to do so.

As colleagues in public service, we too have been on the front lines delivering critical and essential public services during this pandemic and recognize how trying it can be. On behalf of the Association and our members, I want to extend my utmost thanks and appreciation for the hard work you and your staff across your board have done these past two years to keep schools safe and operational.

We understand that this is a busy time of year for all educators, support staff, students and families, and we know the difficulties that come with planning for 2022 amidst the pandemic. We hope that in your deliberations on the next school year calendar, your board will schedule a Professional Development Day on Municipal Election Day, October 24th, 2022. If you already planned to do so, we thank you for your support. We would appreciate being kept up to date as to the decision taken by your school board.

Sincerely,



Sandra MacDonald, CMO, AMCT, AOMC
President, AMCTO

Cc: Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education,
Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education
Caspar Hall, Interim Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Division, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Cathy Abrams, President, Ontario Public School Boards Association
Patrick J. Daly, President, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Denis M. Chartrand, président, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario
Johanne Lacombe, présidente, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques
Loretta Notten, Chair CODE
Keith Baybayon, President, Ontario Student Trustees' Association
Javan Mayrand, présidente, Regroupement des élèves conseiller.ère.s francophones de l'Ontario
Brian Rosbrough, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario

John Elvridge, City Clerk, City of Toronto

Septembre 27 2021

Aux présidents et présidentes des conseils scolaires
Aux directeurs et directrices de l'éducation

Au nom de l'Association des directeurs généraux, secrétaires et trésoriers municipaux de l'Ontario, je m'adresse à vous aujourd'hui pour vous demander de prévoir la tenue d'une journée pédagogique le jour des prochaines élections municipales et scolaires, soit le lundi 24 octobre 2022, afin de faciliter l'accessibilité et le bon déroulement du processus électoral pour les électrices et électeurs des conseils scolaires.

Notre association représente l'excellence en matière de gestion et de leadership des administrations locales. Avec plus de 2 000 membres au service des municipalités de toute la province, nous sommes la plus grande association bénévole de spécialistes de l'administration locale en Ontario, et le chef de file en matière de perfectionnement professionnel des administrateurs municipaux.

Comme vous le savez, ce sont les secrétaires des municipalités qui organisent les élections scolaires, et ils s'emploient actuellement à planifier la tenue des élections de 2022. Aux termes de l'article 45 de la *Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales*, les secrétaires des municipalités ont le pouvoir d'installer des bureaux de vote dans les écoles. Toutefois, il leur est souvent difficile d'obtenir l'appui des directions d'école qui doivent fournir les locaux voulus pour cet important processus démocratique.

Partout en Ontario, des conseils scolaires collaborent déjà avec les municipalités en prévoyant une journée pédagogique le jour des élections municipales, une fois tous les quatre ans. En 2018, 25 % des conseils scolaires ont accepté de désigner le jour des élections municipales comme journée pédagogique. De plus, 60 % des conseils ont tenu une journée pédagogique en octobre et, dans 30 % des conseils, cette journée tombait à moins d'une semaine du jour des élections. Nous savons aussi que de nombreux conseils tiennent des journées pédagogiques le lundi pour d'autres raisons. Ensemble, nous pouvons accroître la proportion des conseils qui désignent le jour des élections comme journée pédagogique, afin de faciliter le vote pour les électrices et les électeurs tout en assurant la sécurité des élèves.

Le fait de collaborer avec les municipalités une fois tous les quatre ans en désignant le jour des élections municipales et scolaires comme journée pédagogique comporte plusieurs avantages pour un conseil scolaire, pour ses écoles et pour l'ensemble de la communauté. En effet, cela permet de :

- Faciliter l'organisation des élections par les secrétaires des municipalités ainsi que le bon déroulement du processus démocratique qui permet d'élire les membres des conseils scolaires et des conseils municipaux;
- Rehausser la sécurité à l'école pour les élèves et le personnel en réduisant le nombre de personnes présentes sur les lieux;

- Fournir aux électrices et aux électeurs des bureaux de vote situés dans des locaux vastes et accessibles, ce qui favorise la promotion et la sauvegarde de la santé publique grâce à une plus grande distanciation physique.

Il est ainsi possible d'accroître la participation des citoyennes et des citoyens aux élections, à un coût qui est souvent minime, sinon nul, pour les conseils scolaires.

De plus, lorsque des conseils coïncidents s'entendent pour désigner le jour des élections comme journée pédagogique, il leur est plus facile de planifier les services de transport des élèves s'ils doivent le faire en collaboration.

Comme vous, nous appartenons au secteur parapublic. Comme vous, depuis le début de la pandémie, nous fournissons en première ligne des services essentiels, et nous savons à quel point cela peut être difficile. Au nom de mon association et de ses membres, je tiens à vous témoigner notre vive reconnaissance pour le travail ardu que l'ensemble de votre personnel et vous-mêmes accomplissez depuis deux ans afin que les écoles continuent de fonctionner en toute sécurité.

Nous savons que le début de l'année scolaire est une période de grande activité pour les enseignantes et les enseignants, le personnel de soutien, les élèves et les familles. Nous savons aussi qu'il est très difficile de planifier l'année scolaire 2022-2023 en pleine pandémie. Nous espérons toutefois que, lorsque votre conseil établira son calendrier scolaire pour l'année prochaine, il prévoira la tenue d'une journée pédagogique le jour des élections municipales et scolaires, soit le lundi 24 octobre 2022.

Si votre conseil a déjà prévu de le faire, nous vous remercions de votre appui. Nous vous serions reconnaissants de bien vouloir nous informer de la décision de votre conseil, qu'il ait accepté ou non de donner suite à notre demande.

Je vous prie d'agréer mes cordiales salutations.

La présidente,



Sandra MacDonald, CMO, AMCT, AOMC

Cc: Stephen Lecce, ministre de l'Éducation
Steve Clark, ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Kate Manson-Smith, sous-ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Nancy Naylor, sous-ministre de l'Éducation
Caspar Hall, sous-ministre adjoint par intérim, Division des administrations locales, ministère des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cathy Abrams, présidente, Ontario Public School Boards Association
Patrick J. Daly, président, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Denis M. Chartrand, président, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario
Johanne Lacombe, présidente, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques

Loretta Notten, présidente, Conseil ontarien des directions de l'éducation
Keith Baybayon, président, Ontario Student Trustees' Association
Javan Mayrand, présidente, Regroupement des élèves conseiller.ère.s
francophones de l'Ontario
Brian Rosborough, directeur général, Association des municipalités de
l'Ontario
John Elvridge, secrétaire de la Ville de Toronto

Draft Council Resolution Template (For illustrative purposes to help inform the development of your own council resolution)

WHEREAS Monday, October 24 2022 is Municipal and School Board election day, and municipal clerks who administer Municipal and School Board elections are in the middle of planning for this important democratic event.

AND WHEREAS municipalities have statutory authority to use schools as polling places under section 45 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.

AND WHEREAS schools are often the largest, most centrally located and accessible facility in communities which make them ideal locations to host polling stations.

AND WHEREAS many school boards across the Province already work with municipalities to schedule a Professional Development Days (PD Days) on municipal election day every four years.

AND WHEREAS the **[Insert Municipality]** municipal clerk runs the elections for **[Insert School Board(s)]**.

AND WHEREAS in 2018, approximately 25% of school boards agreed to make Municipal and School Board Election Day a PD Day. Approximately another 60% had PD days in October already. Almost 30% of had days within a week of municipal election day and there are a number of school boards that schedule PD Days on Mondays already. And therefore, it is possible to make arrangements for a PD Day to fall on Municipal and School Board Election Day.

AND WHEREAS school boards and municipalities can work together, to increase these rates and make it easier for local voters to cast their ballots while ensuring student safety.

AND WHEREAS partnering with municipalities once every four years to ensure that municipal and school board elections fall on a PD Day has a number of benefits to School boards, schools and the broader community including:

- Easing the facilitation of Election Day so that Clerks can ensure a smooth democratic process which elects school board trustees as well as local council members.
- Ensuring public health promotion and protection through more adequate physical distancing in these larger venues.
- Enhancing the principles of safe schools for both students and teachers by reducing the number of people in the school.
- Providing voters with a large, accessible location to cast their votes for their school board and municipal representatives.

AND WHEREAS school boards are entering into deliberations about the 2022-2023 School year calendar in order to submit their proposed calendars to the Ministry of Education by May 2022.

BE IT RESOLVED the **[Insert Municipality Council]** request that the **[Insert School Board(s)]** schedule a Professional Development Day on Municipal and School Board Election Day, October 24th 2022.

Copied to:

- Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education AMCTO
- AMCTO
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario