



**SUDBURY
CATHOLIC
DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD**

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March 4, 2021

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Ross Romano
Ministry of Colleges and Universities
5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Romano,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and our Sudbury Catholic School Board learning community, we are writing to express our continued support for the valuable and essential contributions Laurentian University offers Northern Ontario and our school board. We understand that the University finds itself in an extremely difficult position and it is our hope that all possible measures will be taken by our government to assist them in preserving programming and stabilizing their operations. Laurentian University along with its federated partners hold a strong and essential presence in Sudbury and in Northern Ontario, offering programming in both English and French with a comprehensive approach to Indigenous education. There are many reasons that we are advocating for the preservation of Laurentian University as vital to the success of our community.

First of all, many of our Sudbury Catholic School Board graduates chose Laurentian University as their university of choice. Laurentian University, along with its federated partners, Thorneloe, Huntington and the University of Sudbury, offer a broad range of quality programs in both French and English in our community, making post-secondary education affordable and accessible for our students. In fact, if the University was not in our community many students would not be able to attend due to the high cost of attending a University outside of their community. A post-secondary education opens doors for our students and ensures that our youth are prepared to enter the workforce and to remain in Northern Ontario where skilled and talented young people are needed.

Secondly, since 2015, we have been growing our International Education program. This program enhances our student experience by providing increased opportunities to develop global competencies, promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures and languages. It is our goal to make Sudbury a destination of choice for International students. Having post-secondary options here in our city, helps us to promote Sudbury as an optimal destination and to attract International students to our community. We share Ontario's commitment of teaching our youth to appreciate and understand the global perspectives they will need to succeed in our diverse and interconnected world. International education programming in our schools and post-secondary institutions enhances the fabric of our community, enriches the experience for all and will help to grow Northern Ontario.

Lastly and very importantly, many of our employees are graduates of Laurentian University. Laurentian University graduates can be found in all areas of our organization, most notably is our teaching compliment. The vast majority of our teachers are graduates from the Faculty of Education at Laurentian University, many of them with French as a Second Language qualifications. With the extreme shortage of qualified teachers in Ontario, particularly French speaking teachers, any negative impact on both the French and the English Faculties of Education would have serious consequences on our ability to recruit teachers for our classrooms. While at the Faculty, pre-service teachers complete their placements in our schools, enhancing our programs and enriching our classrooms. These are the individuals who upon graduation become valuable members of our school board. Laurentian University is essential to our being able to ensure that we have qualified teachers in our classrooms. It is a strong possibility that if our young people were to study elsewhere that they would remain in those communities and not return to Sudbury to begin their careers. Educating both our English and French speaking students in their home community increases the probability that they will remain in Sudbury where they are greatly needed.

We appreciate the complexity of the issues surrounding Laurentian University and respectfully ask our government to do what it can to support LU and to assist them out of this situation as they are a vital institution in Ontario, the City of Greater Sudbury and for the Sudbury Catholic District School Board. As a post-secondary institution located in Northern Ontario offering both French and English programing, it has become an essential contributor to the economic, educational and workforce needs of our community.

Thank you for giving our perspective serious consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Michael Bellmore', with a stylized, overlapping loop structure.

Michael Bellmore
Chair, Sudbury Catholic District School Board

- c. Joanne Bénard, Director of Education
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