

October 2, 2007

To: Bluewater District School Board  
P.O. Box 190, 351 - 1st Ave. N.  
Chesley, Ontario.  
N0G 1L0

Attention: Jennifer Yenssen

From: Specialist High Skills Major Steering Committee  
Chesley Agricultural Program  
Chesley, Ontario.

Dear Ms. Yenssen,

As you are aware, we have, as a group of community members, industry representatives, government representatives and educators been meeting regularly to provide some input into the implementation and direction of the Specialist High Skills Major in Agriculture at Chesley District High School. Members of the Steering Committee from Bruce Peninsula District High School's SHSM in Environmental Studies also joined us at our last meeting on September 13, 2007.

We have spent a portion of our meeting time on the logistics and mechanics of setting up the program. Committee members have also been able to inform our community - both locally and regionally - about what we have learned in setting up this pilot project and the benefits it provides to our students. Each member on this committee is passionate that the Agricultural Pilot project and other SHSM programs are an excellent way to teach our children into the future. We hear repeatedly from educators that the most effective learning for anyone is through experiential learning. Steering committee members also recognize that a large portion of the skills learned through any SHSM project are transferable and are skills our students will need in their future either at work, on the job, or in the community.

We recognize that sustainability is our next challenge. Our steering committee is contemplating how to make the SHSM programs continue to work effectively into the future. We recognize that there will be challenges and would like to work in cooperation with the Trustees and Senior Administration of the Board to address these challenges.

Therefore, the community and business members are requesting time at the November 2007 Bluewater District School Board meeting to:

1. Present an update on the current status of the SHSM program at CDHS
2. Outline some challenges we feel are facing the SHSM projects
3. Request that one of the trustees be appointed to sit on our steering committee and act as liaison with the Board

The SHSM is a great way to teach students. The benefit to our children today and our community and society into the future is great. We look forward to working with you to ensure the continued success of SHSMs.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours truly,



Ron DeVisser  
Parent member  
Chesley Specialist High Skills Major Steering Committee

On behalf of Committee Members:

Dave Barrett, Saugeen Economic Development Corporation  
Gertie Blake, Ontario Federation of Agriculture – Grey, Bruce  
Marshall Draper, Passport to Prosperity  
Jane Muegge, Regional Information Coordinator for Bruce and Huron – OMAFRA  
Jay Notay, dean of Owen Sound Campus, Georgian College  
Keith Reid, Soil Fertility Specialist, OMAFRA  
Ray Robertson, Manager, Grey County Agricultural Services Centre  
Vince Stutzki, Sheep Farmer, CDHS School Community Council  
Barbara Wright, OYAP Coordinator