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November 15, 2010

The Honourable Tony Clement  
Minister of Industry  
C.D. Howe Building  
235 Queen Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

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Peel Living	

Regional Municipality of Peel  
Office of the Regional Chair

NOV 26 2010

RECEIVED

Dear Minister Clement:

RE: Elimination of Census Canada's Mandatory Long Form Questionnaire

I am writing to convey the Peel District School Board's support for the Ontario Public School Boards' Association's position on the federal government's recent decision to eliminate the mandatory long form census questionnaire. We agree that solid, statistical data is needed to inform public policy and that the census is the only way to track many of Canada's most pressing social trends and problems.

This school board uses the long form census data to develop its social risk index, which is an important factor in determining where our early learning centres and community support programs are most needed. Without accurate data, the ability to connect students to the programs and services they need is compromised.

The Region of Peel continues to be a rapidly growing area with many unique circumstances in terms of immigration rates, poverty levels, ESL needs, etc. For decades, the federally supported community services in this Region have been underfunded, based on census data. Without the information provided through the long form census questionnaires, this underfunding will continue and likely be exacerbated by the lack of concrete data to identify the needs of families and communities in this Region.

We join the voices of the Ontario School Boards' Association and the many other organizations and individuals across Canada who are urging the government to reinstate this essential data tool.

Sincerely,

Janet McDougald  
Chair

attachment

- c. Ontario Public School Boards' Association  
Emil Kolb, Chair, Region of Peel  
Peel MPs

REFERRAL TO \_\_\_\_\_  
 RECOMMENDED \_\_\_\_\_  
 DIRECTION REQUIRED \_\_\_\_\_  
 RECEIPT RECOMMENDED

**Trustees**  
Janet McDougald, Chair  
Ruth Thompson, Vice-Chair  
Valerie Arnold-Judge  
Beryl Ford  
David Green  
Steve Kavanagh

Brad MacDonald  
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Don Stephens  
Allison Van Wagner  
Jeff White  
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Director of Education and Secretary  
Tony Pontes

Associate Director,  
Instructional Support Services  
Pam Tomasevic

Associate Director,  
Operational Support Services  
Carla Kisko



# Media Release



Leading Education's Advocates

July 20, 2010

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Let's Come to our Census**

**Toronto, July 20, 2010** - School boards make sound policy decisions based on current, accurate, and reliable data. The federal government's recent decision to eliminate the census's mandatory long form questionnaire undermines access to a whole range of valid information about Canadian society. One of Canada's strengths is the solid statistical information that informs our public policy and describes us to the world. Weakening the quality of census data ultimately weakens Canada and our reputation as a strong, open democracy. It certainly weakens the capacity of the education sector to respond effectively to the needs of children and families.

"We are joining a growing list of Canadians who are urging the government to reverse this ill-conceived cabinet decision," said OPSBA president Catherine Fife.

Census data is one of the best sources of information about Canadians and helps us to learn what services and programs are needed most, and where they are best located. This is vitally true in the world of education. For example, Ontario has launched the first phase of an extended and integrated full-day early learning program for four- and five-year olds. One of the goals of this initiative is to promote school readiness. Census data allows school boards to connect the readiness of five-year-olds to thrive in school with the social and economic circumstances in which they live. This information allows school boards to find ways to prepare children to get the most out of their school experience which ultimately helps them achieve better outcomes.

"Without accurate data, connecting students to the programs and services they need is compromised. This vital work should not become a guessing game," said OPSBA president Catherine Fife. "Our students and their families deserve better."

A specific priority of OPSBA is an increased focus on the educational, mental, emotional, social and physical needs of children. These needs are linked together in terms of successful experience in school and addressing them is connected to having reliable and relevant information. This is especially vital when school boards are trying to measure whether they are doing the right things to help increase achievement in school for specific demographic groups be they First Nations, Métis, Inuit or newcomers to Canada. The long-form census is a key tool for school boards in understanding populations and assessing living conditions.

The census is the only way to track many of Canada's most pressing social trends and problems. In the information age, finding solutions to those problems requires, dare we say it, Mr. Harper, ...information.