



For immediate release

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### **Public forum seeks opinions on schools**

Regina – Parents and community members will gather at City Hall on Tuesday evening to talk about how their children and communities are faring in the K-12 school system.

“There’s been a series of significant changes made with little or no public input,” said Trish Elliott, spokesperson for RealRenewal, the group organizing the forum. “We want to find out what’s happening on the ground.”

Changes include a dramatic reduction in educational assistants and community coordinators, particularly in Regina Public. “Parents have never been asked if this is a good idea, or how it impacts their children,” Elliott said.

As well, school closures continue, leading to rapid overpopulation in the remaining schools. “This creates a whole new set of issues for the public. With rising population and so little flexibility left in the system, do we need to rethink recent closure decisions?” Elliott said.

Provincially, the Ministry of Education has ended designated community school funding and terminated the First Nations, Métis and Community Education Branch without on-the-ground consultation, she added.

“Ministry officials say they consult with stakeholders, but I can tell you the people closest to the issues – parents and community members – are never asked for their thoughts or given avenues for direct, unfiltered input,” Elliott said. “Community education gatherings have become financially and logistically out of reach for parents to attend. That’s why a straight-up, free and open public forum like this is a necessity.”

While such key issues are likely to come up during the forum, discussion will include any topic or concern that people bring to the meeting, Elliott said. “We’ll be asking people at the door what they want to talk about, and shaping the agenda from that list,” she explained.

RealRenewal will forward comments to decision-making bodies such as the Ministry of Education and the Regina Public School Board. The forum will also include discussion about opportunities for public action. It takes place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 1 in the Doreen Hamilton Room at City Hall.

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