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Open letter to Qualicum School District 69 Board of Trustees and Superintendent
Regarding: Facility Review, Public Consultation, enrolment forecast

Dear Qualicum School District 69 Board of Trustees and Superintendent

I write to you so that you may address statements made by the Qualicum School District (QSD) 69 Superintendent, Mr. Rollie Koop, March 4, 2014. I contend that the Superintendent's statements indicate an effort to stifle the public consultation and unfairly withhold important information regarding the recommendation to close public schools.

Please be aware, the Superintendent's consideration of any request for the method used to create the 2013 enrolment forecast as "that tired debate" and his refusal to allow verification of the forecast, reflect a lack of appreciation for the consideration of future enrolment, a lack of appreciation of the need for integrity of the forecast and the inclusion of the method, and a lack of appreciation for the public consultation. If the method was provided at the beginning of the facility review, we would not be wasting time and cost to when the forecast numbers can be verified and reproduced.

Also, the Superintendent should refrain from profiling public consultation participants, parents/guardians, citizens/taxpayers who ask questions as he did in his March 4, 2014 response.

"Any attempt to suggest/imply a grassy knoll conspiracy theory is disrespectful of the work that trustees, staff, and the community has done collaboratively to this point."

Apparently, because I ask for the method, I am considered by the Superintendent to not be part of the community and not collaborative. Please be aware that I am a member of the community and allowed to participate in the facility review. The Superintendent's reference to asking for the method used to create the new lower forecast during a facility review as "disrespectful" is unbecoming of a person in the position of Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent's statement reflects his point of view and deviates from the "fair consideration of community members' input" endorsed by the School Act .

Methods and input data must accompany findings, not only to ensure that the methods and data provided are correct, but to allow for a better understanding of what the findings mean. Please recall, the 1998 methods and indicators provided by BC Statistics, referred to in QSD facility review in 2010, were not the real methods nor the real data used and questioned at that time as well. See correspondence with Statistics Canada and Ministers online, as well as the presentation at the 2013 Congress at www.PopulationProjections\Questions.html

Indeed, BC Statistics Directors decided to use the change in the number of telephone landlines as an indicator of population change despite the rapid increase in cell phone use, neglecting in particular, urban young adults. According to BC Statistics' population estimation methods paper (revised in 2011), methods and data were changed many times for over a decade without peer-review, and without being published. Public consultation participants addressing school closures in QSD, as well as Statistics Canada addressing methods for equalization payments, were not told about the use of telephone line hookups and instead were given methods and indicators no longer being used.

As Board of Education Trustees, you can appreciate that fundamental to education is the requirement to ensure that correct methods and data accompany "findings". No high school nor university student

would be allowed to withhold the method and data that they used to come up with “findings”. Withholding the methods and data would result in failure and a requirement to repeat.

To meet the basics of BC’s Prescribed Learning Outcomes, students are to “demonstrate effective research skills, including being able to access and assess information, collect and evaluate data, to interpret statistical data”, and to “demonstrate skills and attitudes of active citizenship, such as ethical behaviour, open-mindedness, respect for diversity, and collaboration.”

Instead, the Superintendent is denying a request for access to information and not allowing the collection, evaluation, assessment, and interpretation of statistical data.

Also the Superintendent’s statement that he considers requests for the method and data used to create the new lower enrolment forecast to be an “attempt to suggest/imply a grassy knoll conspiracy theory” is disrespectful of me and other public consultation participants who question the numbers, and demonstrates a lack of skills and attitudes of active citizenship, such as ethical behaviour, open-mindedness, respect for diversity, and collaboration.

As you can appreciate, until the method and data used are made available, the facility review can reasonably be considered to be flawed, failing to meet the conditions set out in the School Act regarding Opening and Closing public schools.

As a community member and participant in the public consultation, I demand an apology from the Board of Education and the Superintendent and insist on being able to verify the enrolment forecast in an effort to better understand how the numbers were created.

Yours truly,

Warren Munroe
Public Consultation Participant, QSD Facility Review