At that meeting, it became clear to me that the board has presented options for closure based solely on geographic distribution. While I recognize this is an important consideration, it strikes me that this approach is a rather shallow analysis; especially given the potential impact of these decisions on our children's educations and the sustainability of all schools in this affected area. After further exploration of the PAR process guidelines by the ministry of education, I noted that the guidelines specifically identify student well-being, academic achievement and school board financial viability/sustainability as the key guiding principles that should be at the core of any PAR process. No mention of geographic considerations.

**Question #1: How is the dpcsbs incorporating the guiding principles of student well-being, academic achievement and school board financial viability/sustainability into their review process; and in the options presented by staff?**

Further research on the ministry of education site uncovered some interesting best practices that were identified through 3 case studies and summarized in the attached document. I would like to call attention to 2 highlighted quotes on this document by the superintendents involved in these processes:

"While operational decisions may differ from school to school the mission and vision around student achievement has to take the lead in all conversations about facilities" (Superintendent)

"Decisions are made through the lens of student learning so there has to be strong collaboration between those making capital and finance decisions and program planning and leadership." (Superintendent)

**Question #2: Given that this is the first PAR review process by dpcsbs, what research did the board do in regards to learnings and best practices of other PAR reviews in the province? If any, what were the key findings and specifically, the role of student achievement (EQAO or otherwise) in the decision making process?**

The implication that St. Dunstan parents are being "elitist"; and somehow less christian by bringing up EQAO scores for consideration is simply offensive to the highest degree. We understand that students have varying abilities, strengths and personalities; and we love and care for all our children in our community. We are not suggesting that we value our children by assigning a score. Rather, we are simply recognizing the reality that EQAO scores (whether like them or not) play a role for parents when deciding where to enroll their children and thus are a factor in determining long-term viability of the schools sustainability (through taxation and enrollment).

**Questions #3 and 4: Has the board researched any data or correlation between EQAO scores and enrollment? Has the board researched the correlation between EQAO scores and real estate sales?**

I would like to also draw your attention to a 1994 study by the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards & Student Testing (CRESST) that clearly spells out the factors that contributes to a successful school; specifically that:

"What makes a good school has less to do with the configuration of the school or the socioeconomic standard of the neighborhood. There are successful schools in the inner cities of America, just as there are unsuccessful ones in the country's wealthy suburbs."

The report goes on to describe the factors leading to high performing schools being:
• Strong and professional teachers and administrators
• A broad curriculum available to all students
• A philosophy that all children can be taught; coupled with high expectations for all students
• A school environment that is conducive to learning (caring, clean, organized, safe)
• An on-going assessment system that supports good instruction
• High level of parent and community involvement

This should emphasize to you that our St. Dunstan community is not being "elitist" when we cite EQAO scores as a factor for consideration; and such an implication is completely unfounded. Rather, we want to ensure that this PAR review results in the best quality education for all the children in the east credit region regardless of the school location or neighborhood demographics. You should also note that most of these factors are ingrained in the systems, personnel and environment of the school and are not simply transferable through students.

*Question #5 and #6: Has the board researched the factors that contribute to high performing schools and high enrollment schools (including the influence of performance scores and rankings)? Does the board have evidence/research to support which of these factors are transferable?*

I sincerely pray that you are able use the contents of this email to help inform an evidence based decision process that will lead to the best outcomes for our most valuable asset in our east credit community; our children.

God bless.
Board Response to Correspondence:

**WG3-65 – St. Dunstan + 65a, 65b att.**

ARC member asked to go through the specific questions in this email. Resource staff responses:

1. This was one of the parking lot questions, to be answered at a future meeting
2. We are one of first boards to go through the accommodation review process with brand new guidelines. As far as best practices, there are none, only lessons learned from old way of doing it.
3. EQAO results and different issues raised at different school boards. No one has completed the process yet, so there are no best practices.
4. We are not aware of any research; no enrolment survey is part of our registration information. Real estate sales have no correlation to closure of schools.
5. & 6. We spoke to transference of student's ability in the minutes; can’t predict transference of ability of student, external factors may influence ability when transferring to other communities. As far as a direct correlation between EQAO and transference to other schools, we don’t have that data, but we do have data on innovation and celebration of things happening in our schools.

**ACTION:** Provide information on innovation and celebration of things happening in our schools.

Two attachments – case study / what makes a good school

ARC member asked if staff are aware of this report, have any comments and if it is a good report? The Chair responded that he had no previous knowledge of this report. It speaks to the whole combining of schools; the effective practice of what effective schools are made of.