



**WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

"Learning together in faith and service"

1325 California Avenue
Windsor, ON N9B 3Y6

CHAIRPERSON: Barbara Holland

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: Paul A. Picard

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, November 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
Windsor Essex Catholic Education Centre
John Paul II Board Room**

MINUTES

PRESENT

Trustees: F. Costante B. Mastromattei
M. DiMenna, *Vice-Chair* L. Soulliere
F. DiTomasso S. Tope
B. Holland, *Chair* F. Valentinis

J. Bowers, Student Trustee
M. Diab, Student Trustee
Rev. L. Brunet, Board Chaplain

Regrets: Trustee Alexander

Administration: P. Picard (Resource) E. Byrne C. Norris
C. Geml S. Fields M. Seguin
M. Iatonna P. King J. Ulicny
T. Lyons R. Lo Faso

Recorder: B. Marshall

1. Call To Order – Chair Holland called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Opening Prayer – Fr. Brunet opened the meeting with a prayer.
3. Recording of Attendance – Trustee Alexander sends his regrets due to his vacation.
4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee DiMenna and seconded by Trustee Soulliere that the November 24, 2015 Regular Board meeting agenda be approved as distributed. *Carried*

5. Disclosure of Interest - Pursuant to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.:

Post Retirement Benefits for WECDSB Unifor (CAW) employees is currently in litigation.
As a retired CAW employee, Trustee DiTomasso disclosed interest in relation to agenda

items 9b) iv) 2014-2015 Year-End Budget Variance Report and 12a) 2014-2015 Fiscal Year End Financial Statements and did not participate in the discussion or vote on any question raised on that item.

6. Presentations:

- a. “What We Have Learned” – Grades K to 6 and 7 to 12 Models

Documented in a video, teachers, parents and students from St. Bernard Elementary School, Corpus Christi Middle School and F.J. Brennan Secondary School chronicled their initial apprehension, their ongoing support and present commitment to the K to 6 and 7 to 12 models.

7. Delegations:

- a. Catholic Central High School’s Prime Minister Jessica Helou, Assistant Prime Minister Manal Mazammil and Finance Minister Johnathan Nader are here to present “Imagine the Possibilities”.

The above mentioned Catholic Central student council members outlined the school’s many academic, athletic and social achievements despite the limitations of the building. The theme of their presentation “*Imagine the Possibilities*” proposed that imagine what more could be accomplished if they had access to the amenities offered in a more modern school.

- b. Emerson Valley and Kerri Stephenson, St. John Elementary School - Catholic School Advisory Council Members expressing their concerns the west side community has about the potential closure of St. John School and the effect it will have on the whole community.

Emerson Valley and Kerri Stephenson expressed their concerns regarding the potential closing of St. John Catholic Elementary school, specifically in the areas of student achievement, bussing and retention and requested Trustees not to approve or at least postpone the Accommodation Review Study in West Windsor area.

- c. Marianne Baeini, St. Louis Elementary School – Catholic School Advisory Council Chairperson to speak to the Accommodation Review process.

Marianne Baeini expressed her concerns of the Accommodation Review Study in the Leamington area, specifically potential growth in French Immersion Queen of Peace, new Day Care Centre and recently built JK/SK classrooms at St. Louis and the middle school concept. Ms. Baeini is concerned parents within the Leamington Catholic community may register their children to the neighbouring public schools if administration’s initial recommendation is approved and requested Trustees not to undertake an Accommodation Review in the Leamington area.

8. Action Items:

- a. Previous Meeting Minutes
i) Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Board In-Camera Meeting of
October 6, 2015

Moved by Trustee Soulliere and seconded by Trustee Tope that the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Board In-Camera meeting of October 6, 2015 be adopted as distributed. Carried

ii) Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of October 27, 2015

Moved by Trustee DiMenna and seconded by Trustee Tope that the Minutes of the Regular Board meeting of October 27, 2015 be adopted as distributed. Carried

b. Items from the Committee of the Whole Board In-Camera meeting of November 10, 2015 and the Special Committee of the Whole Board In-Camera meeting of November 24, 2015.

Vice Chair DiMenna reported that the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board convened a closed Committee of the Whole Board meeting on November 10, 2015 pursuant to the Education Act - Section 207, to consider specific personnel, real property matters, labour relations matters, and other matters permitted or required to be kept private and confidential under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

In addition, the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board convened a closed Special Committee of the Whole Board meeting on November 24, 2015 pursuant to the Education Act - Section 207, to consider real property matters, labour relations matters and other matters permitted or required to be kept private and confidential under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Moved by Trustee DiMenna and seconded by Trustee Valentinis that the recommendations and directions of the Committee of the Whole Board in-camera meeting on November 10, 2015 and the Special Committee of the Whole Board in-camera meeting on November 24, 2015 be approved. Carried

Vice Chair DiMenna made the following announcements:

From the November 10, 2015 Committee of the Whole Board in-camera meeting

- Approved, effective November 16, 2015, the twinning of St. Jules Catholic Elementary School with St. Bernard Catholic Elementary School in Windsor;
- Approval to extend the Legal Services agreement with Shibley Righton LLP for 6 months with a request for proposal process occurring concurrently; and
- Approved the proposal for the computerized financial management system as submitted by Educational Computing Network of Ontario (ECNO), in partnership with Keous Solutions Inc.;

From the November 24, 2015 Special Committee of the Whole Board in-camera meeting:

- Approval granted to present to the Diocese of London the Board's terms of agreement to transfer the southerly portion of the St. André Catholic Elementary School property (13765 St. Gregory Road, Tecumseh) to the Diocese of London; and
- The board ratified the central terms contained in the Memorandum of Settlement dated November 2, 2015 made with CUPE and the Council of Trustees Associations and

Agreed to by the Crown and the approval of the ratification be reported to the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association.

9. Communications:

a. External (Associations, OCSTA, Ministry):

- i) Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association Memorandum dated October 5, 2015: Trustee Award of Merit

Moved by Trustee Costante and seconded by Trustee DiMenna that the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association Memorandum dated October 5, 2015: Trustee Award of Merit be received as information. Carried

- ii) Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees' Association (OCSTA) Memorandum, dated October 1, 2015 re: 2016 AGM & Conference Resolutions

Trustee Soulliere requested an Ad Hoc Resolution Committee be struck to review the OCSTA resolution package prior to the January 2016 submission deadline.

Moved by Trustee Costante and seconded by Trustee DiTomasso that the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association Memorandum dated October 1, 2015 re: 2016 AGM & Conference Resolutions be received as information. Carried

- iii) Ministry of Education Capital Priority Grant Announcement dated November 9, 2015

Trustee Valentinis understood a series of significant Accommodation Review Committee decisions were made both by the Ministry supervisor and the board of trustees once the board was promised a new Catholic Central site would be constructed and questioned administration on how the Ministry's decision regarding Catholic Central affects the Board's current and future ARC plans.

Administration was led to believe, while under supervision, the primary objective was to get the Board's financial house in order and a critical component to achieve fiscal responsibility was to reduce empty spaces. Both past and proposed ARC's are to maintain that fiscal responsibility and are not directly related to a new Catholic Central school.

Trustee Soulliere commented on the Ministry's letter instructing the Board to seek alternatives to a new Catholic Central school site and posed the following questions to administration:

1. Has the board explored all other possible alternatives before requesting a new Catholic Central school site? and
2. At what point must the board consider closing Catholic Central due to the serious concerns about the condition of the school?

As instructed by the Ministry, administration considered, as an alternative, consolidating Catholic Central with F. J. Brennan, Holy Names or Assumption High Schools. F.J. Brennan and Holy Names are at capacity and Assumption is considered for an Accommodation Review Study. Also, alternative downtown sites were

explored but were not as viable as the Windsor Arena site donated by the City of Windsor.

Due to its age, Catholic Central is difficult to maintain but the board would not allow unsafe conditions. The safety of students and staff are of the upmost concern for the board.

As the representative of Windsor Wards 3 and 4, the location of Catholic Central, Trustee Mastromattei expressed parents' and students' disappointment of the Ministry's decision; questioned the Ministry's explanation for its decision; and invited administration to explain their understanding of Ministry processes regarding how and when schools are identified for reconstruction and repair.

Administration agrees inconsistencies within identification process but understands it is the Ministry's decision to determine schools over the threshold and provide appropriate funding. Moving forward the board will reengage the Ministry to build a new Catholic Central school.

Student Trustees are equally concerned about the Ministry's decision and will convene a special meeting of Student Senate to discuss the matter and to determine how students can best work with the board to petition the Ministry to reconsider their decision.

Director Picard informed trustees the board was not notified of the decision in advance, as were other boards within the province, and was assured by the Ministry the lack of communication, exclusively to this board, was understood.

Moved by Trustee Mastromattei and seconded by Trustee Costante that the Ministry of Education Capital Priority Grant Announcement dated November 9, 2015 be received as information. Carried

b. Internal (Reports from Administration):

- i) Report: Audit Committee Annual Report to the Ministry of Education

Moved by Trustee DiMenna and seconded by Trustee Tope that the Audit Committee's 2014-15 Annual Report to the Ministry of Education be received as information and submitted to the Ministry of Education as required by Ontario Regulation 361/10 - Audit Committees. Carried

- ii) Report: Summer School Programming – 2015

Moved by Trustee Tope and seconded by Trustee Mastromattei that the Board receive the 2015 Summer School Programming report as information. Carried

- iii) Report: Focus on Youth Summer Program - 2015

Moved by Trustee Soulliere and seconded by Trustee DiTomasso that the 2015 Focus on Youth Summer Program report be received as information. Carried

- iv) Report: 2014-2015 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division (Grades 1-3) and Junior Division (Grades 4-6) and the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

Moved by Trustee Valentinis and seconded by Trustee DiTomasso that the Board receive the 2014-2015 EQAO Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division (Grades 1-3) and Junior Division (Grades 4-6) and the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics report as information. Carried

- v) Report: 2014-2015 Real Property Disposition and Acquisition Summary

Moved by Trustee DiMenna and seconded by Trustee DiTomasso that the Board receive the 2014-15 Property Disposition and Acquisition Summary as information. Carried

- vi) Report: 2014-2015 Year-End Budget Variance Report

In answer to capital reserve questions, Executive Superintendent Iatonna explained the current Ministry accounting requirements.

Moved by Trustee Tope and seconded by Trustee Costante that the 2014-15 Year-End Budget Variance Report be received as information. Carried

- 10. Committee Reports:
 - a. Report: French Immersion Advisory Committee (FIAC) Minutes of May 21, 2015

Moved by Trustee DiMenna and seconded by Trustee DiTomasso that the Board receive the Minutes of the May 21, 2015 French Immersion Advisory Committee meeting as information. Carried

- 11. Unfinished Business: *None*

- 12. New Business:
 - a. Report: 2014-2015 Fiscal Year-End Financial Statements

Moved by Trustee Soulliere and seconded by Trustee Mastromattei that the Board approve the audited 2014-15 Fiscal Year-End Financial Statements. Carried

- b. Report: Accommodation Review – Amherstburg Area

Director Picard provided insight on the exercise of accommodation reviews. In order for the board to achieve effective fiscal management, empty school spaces must be addressed in order to not hinder program funding. The Modified ARC process is recommended to allow for a longer period of transition.

Director Picard acknowledged the difficulties for school communities, trustees, students and staff during accommodation review studies.

Trustee DiTomasso does not agree with the Modified process and would prefer the Standard ARC process.

Moved by Trustee Soulliere and seconded by Trustee Valentinis that approval be given to undertake an accommodation review in the Amherstburg area to include St. Bernard and Stella Maris Catholic Elementary Schools; and

That the Board approve undertaking the accommodation review in accordance with the modified pupil accommodation review process adopted by the Board through Board Policy A: 05 Pupil Accommodation Review and Administrative Procedure Pr A: 05 Pupil Accommodation Review. *Carried*

c. Report: Accommodation Review – West Windsor Area

Trustee Costante questioned administration on new Ministry guidelines, specifically public consultation with municipality; whether in the past an original recommendation has been changed based on community input; courses offered if Middle School model approved; Elementary and Middle School International Baccalaureate Diploma Program; student achievement; the Budget; public consultation; transportation to and from school as well as after school programs; student safety; and lastly ARC public consultation process.

Trustee Costante clearly expressed that this evening trustees were not approving the closure of St. John Elementary school but to proceed with an Accommodation Review study.

Moved by Trustee Valentinis and seconded by Trustee Mastromattei that approval be given to undertake an accommodation review in the West Windsor area to include Assumption College Catholic High School and St. James and St. John Catholic Elementary Schools; and

That the Board approve undertaking the accommodation review of the West Windsor area in accordance with the modified pupil accommodation review process adopted by the Board through Board Policy A: 05 Pupil Accommodation Review and Administrative Procedure Pr A: 05 Pupil Accommodation Review. *Carried*

d. Report: Accommodation Review – Leamington Area

Trustee DiMenna inquired on whether administration had the opportunity to meet with the Town of Leamington; questioned on ground capacity at Cardinal Carter High School; and whether business courses will be implemented at Cardinal Carter.

Trustee DiMenna expressed her concern and displeasure with the recommendation for a Modified Accommodation Review study, preferring the Standard ARC process.

Senior Manager of Human Resources and Policy Development Colleen Norris reviewed the Modified versus Standard Accommodation Review processes.

Moved by Trustee Soulliere and seconded by Trustee Valentinis that approval be given to undertake an accommodation review in the Leamington area to include Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School and Queen of Peace and St. Louis Catholic Elementary Schools; and

That the Board approve undertaking the accommodation review of the Leamington area in accordance with the modified pupil accommodation review process adopted by the Board through Board Policy A: 05 Pupil Accommodation Review and Administrative Procedure Pr A: 05 Pupil Accommodation Review. Carried

13. Notice of Motion: *None*

14. Remarks and Announcements:

a. Chairperson's Remarks:

- Congratulated student trustees' initiative to assemble students to assist with the Catholic Central issue.
- Congratulations to Trustee Fabio Costante on receiving the University of Windsor's alumni Odyssey Award. This award recognizes alumni who are in the early years of their career path, having distinguished themselves through successes in career endeavours, notable achievements in their local community or the University of Windsor, or through a significant or innovative achievement in their professional or personal life.
- The School Commissioning Ceremony is scheduled on Thursday, December 3rd. School Council Chairs, Principals, Trustees and administration will be attending this celebration.

b. Director of Education Director of Education Picard provided comments on recent activities supporting the Board's strategic priorities namely;

Catholic Faith Formation: This Sunday is the First Sunday of Advent, a time of spiritual reflection and anticipation. Thank you to principals, teachers and staff who, through activities, prayer and celebrations, prepare our students during this joyous occasion.

Employee Development and Student Achievement Initiatives: Workshops during the month of December: SafeTALK training; System Implementation and Monitoring Junior Math; New Teachers Induction Program Session; On Track to Success Program Planning; and LSST Teacher Behavioural Management System Training.

Community Engagement and Partnerships: Thank you and congratulations to the Board's Supervisor of International Education, Nadia Desjardins and her assistant Denise Kimmerly, for hosting the first International Education forum targeting the post secondary application process. Three distinguished universities were represented, namely, the University of Windsor, University of Waterloo and Brock University. The board room was full with our international students, their Homestay parents, agents, the superintendent responsible international education from Greater Essex County District School Board and most impressively, over 80 parents were on live feed from China and Korea. The students were able to hear their parent's questions and the entire presentation

simultaneously. Thank you to our IT department for their expertise, patience and assistance. The event would not have been possible without their support.

Celebrating Achievements: Thanked the staff and students for the numerous events and assemblies that occurred during anti-bullying week.

Miscellaneous: Grade 8 Nights at our High Schools are scheduled throughout December and January. Please refer to either the High School or Board's website for more information.

- b. Board Chaplain commented on the Advent season which begins this Sunday and encouraged all to find ways to reach out to the poor.

15. Remarks/Questions by Trustees

Trustee Tope provided insight on the past Tecumseh ARC process and the positive outcomes and successes.

Trustee Mastromattei mentioned the passing of two former educators, J.F. Johnson who was the former Windsor Separate School Board Director and Fr. Des Scanlon.

Trustee Valentinis attended Holy Names Catholic High School 16th Annual Honour Roll Society where last year's 400 student graduates achieved 80% or better. Congratulations to students, parents and staff.

Trustee DiMenna thanked administration, Chair Holland and Trustee DiTomasso for attending a tour of Mucci Farms Ltd. The tour was intended to provide insight on the numerous employment possibilities within the Greenhouse sector.

Student Trustees Bowers and Diab commented on the activities and events occurring within the Board's eight high schools as well as Student Senate.

16. Pending Items: *None*

17. Future Regular Board Meetings: *Unless stated otherwise, all meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Windsor Essex Catholic Education Centre - 1325 California Avenue, Windsor beginning at 7:00 p.m.*

- Tuesday, December 1, 2015 (Organizational Meeting – 7:30 pm start)
- Tuesday, December 15, 2015
- Tuesday, January 26, 2016
- Tuesday, February 23, 2016
- Tuesday, March 29, 2016
- Tuesday, April 26, 2016
- Tuesday, May 24, 2016
- Tuesday, June 14, 2016 (*Additional*)
- **MONDAY**, June 27, 2016

Committee of the Whole Board In-Camera Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm (closed sessions).

18. Adjourn to In-Camera meeting, if required: *Not necessary*
19. Closing Prayer – Fr. Brunet closed the meeting with a prayer.
20. Adjournment – There being no further business, the Regular Board meeting of November 24, 2015 adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Original signed by B. Holland and P. Picard

Barbara Holland
Chairperson of the Board

Paul A. Picard
Director of Education & Secretary of the Board

Hello Trustees and Administrators.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the potential Accommodation Review of West Windsor.

My Name is Kerri Stephenson, I am the chair of the St. John CSAC and this is Emerson Valley our CSAC Treasurer. I have served on the CSAC for the 8 years, Emerson for 4 years. My daughter is a student at St. John.

Today we would like to highlight the growth and effectiveness of St. John School since the last ARC. Our delegation is aware that the discussion tonight is whether the review should take place and not about the closure of the School. It is our opinion based on our information that the review is not necessary but should be revisited November 2016.

(45 seconds)

At the time of the ARC St. John had a population of 201 students that fell to a low of 170 in 2014. It seemed inevitable that the school would close during the next ARC. The CSAC and school Staff worked tirelessly to improve student achievement and help St John become a school of choice for parents. The school's population grew from this low. It now sits at 206.

It was expected that the new Westgate would draw students away from St John because it was a new building. The CSAC proactively worked with our community and with the help of administration created a proposal to be sent with our MPP Theresa Piruzza to the Ministry. The final proposal was well received by the community and this administration. The proposal was to move St. John whole to Assumption creating a K-12 Dual track school leveraging the IB approval

Assumption currently holds for a k-12 while maintain a standard k-12 stream, keeping the community together. Churches and schools are communities not buildings. Unfortunately capital funding for our proposal and CCH that year went to the public board.

(1:50)

To improve the school's outlook, student achievement must be the 1st driver. St. John School was in remediation for many years. A concerted effort was taken a few years back to do this. Focus was placed on attendance with high expectations and reward/consequences. Scores on EQAO improved and the school was removed from the remediation list.

In the Windsor Star, Mr. Picard was quoted "The middle school students are getting exposure to programs we could never offer at an elementary school." This is not the whole story. The CSAC and students have fundraised and purchased enough Chromebooks for every student grades 5-8. St John has achieved ECO status through efforts of students and staff. Last year St. John started a Robotics program that saw their team make the top 4 in Essex County and represent at the Southern Ontario Regional competition at the University of Waterloo. This program continues this year. Intermediate students are included in most programs with the seniors. St. John students get similar opportunities that middle schools do. With the school only a few blocks from Assumption many of the synergies anticipated by administration are already happening today without the need for a middle school.

(2:50)

This year was the 1st year in the last 10 that our school opened a classroom instead of closing or maintaining. Last year St John graduated 17 students and enrolled 21 Jr kindergarten. It was through this board's creativity to allow non baptized student to join our school helped this growth. This was not well advertised and not given enough time to germinate. Parents of grade 4 students are not shopping for schools but kindergarten parents are. It is our expectation with the correct socialization and advertising of the dropping of the baptism requirement this school should see a net gain of 10 students per year.

This is 10 more students per year that will receive the word of God within the education. In 3 years we should reach the 75% target. This is the mandate of the Catholic education system.

(3:33)

Additionally, St. John School today is already very well utilized. Along with the instructional classrooms. The school hosts rooms for UNIFOR, CUPE, the board book depository, and spec-Ed equipment. St John along with CCH also have funding from the Ministry to support non-profits using the school as a community resource. The Gym is used every day by community groups. That revenue could be lost forever.

We have spoken to a cross section of parents and they have expressed a strong desire for the walking students to continue to be able to walk to school. One mother of 4 students said that she would move them to Westgate to achieve this. Another parent expressed a concerns that they may be forced to an overcrowded ICS because she is on the eastern boundary of St. John It would be worse if her children had 30+ minute bus rides. Every student that moves to the K-6 at St

James will need to be bussed. How much does it cost to bus an additional 150 students?

(4:20)

Close the only Catholic School on the near west side will irreparably harm Catholicism in the area creating a hole from riverside to Labelle and Crawford to Huron Church. If this happens Assumption will lose a feeder school, it is accepted by the community that Assumption fate will also be sealed. It is a given that Assumption will lose IP intake to Tecumseh Vista when their K-12 IB get started.

The current Review process says that the board must present its preferred option at the outset. Many felt that the ARC was flawed because the board had a preferred option but did not share. This created a resentment that the decision was already made and the community was along for the show. St. John has experience an abnormal turn over at the role of principal and teacher. Over the has ½ decade teachers have posted out of St. John specifically because they felt the school will close. We had nearly 100% turn over this year. Prospective parents are avoiding this school because they feel there is no future. Despite this this school has shown it can overcome obstacles and continue to improve student outcomes. This school can be a great school given some stability and confidence.

The board currently has an 18 million dollar surplus. This seems to reduce the urgency and should allow for a patient and thoughtful process. The new accelerated Accommodation Review process is neither.

(5:00)

Given the improvements to St. John, the financial conditions and the ability to now reach more students with Catholic teachings, at this time it is unnecessary to conduct a review of the West for accommodation.

Do not conduct the review, wait 1 year, see if the efforts we have all made improve things bear fruit. We could have all 3 Catholic schools at 75-80+% occupancy with high achievement.

Thank you.

(5:30)

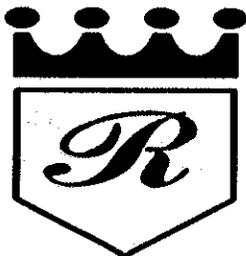
Marianne Beini

Delegation from St. Louis Catholic School

To Vote against ARC Review

For the Leamington Sector

Tuesday November 24th, 2015



LEAMINGTON
ONTARIO CANADA

Good evening Board Members, Trustees and fellow parents,

My name is Marianne Baeini. I am a parent of children who attend St. Louis Catholic School in Leamington. I am also the Co-Chair of our parent council and an alumni St. Louis Crusader.

I am here today to put a plea in to ask that you vote against the ARC review process for the Leamington sector which affects 3 families of schools – St. Louis, Queen of Peace and Cardinal Carter.

The purpose of an ARC review as you all know is to review the student environment that supports student achievement and to address declining enrollment.

3 years ago, it was decided that to compete with the French board, solely St. Michel of Leamington, Queen of Peace school was to be turned into French Immersion. This school was chosen over St. Louis because of the already declining enrollment vs. the increased enrollment at St. Louis. With that change, enrollment of Queen of Peace declined to give it a population of approx. 200 students. The decline was due to families of students who wanted their kids to be in a straight English speaking school. Some students began to attend our school while others fled to the Public Board. It is proven that with any change, a minimum of 5 years should be given for something to grow and strive. Queen of Peace has at least 2 additional years to give it a fighting chance. Reach out to parents within the community, if a dual-track program was re-offered back at the school, would parents in the surrounding area send their children to Queen of Peace and allow the school to grow back to the school it once was?

Compared to St. Louis' enrollment of 336 students (in which 100 of them are walkers), St. Louis has had a steadily growing population over the last 3 years. The addition of the daycare facility which also provides before and after school programs, helped lease out an area of the school to utilize space and an increase in enrollment occurred. Currently, Queen of Peace houses a free Discovery program but if they can expand on the offerings, parents are given more options for their child's provider and therefore enrollment may increase. Parents like the concept of dropping off their little ones at the day care while their older children go to school all in a "one stop shop" concept. This is a critical and valuable service provided to parents. It creates a unity hub within the community in which the Ministry is asking us to create. It is already at a school that is functioning with full efficiency. St. Louis is ahead of the game and already living the vision so why not get the other schools on board as well?

Also, the implementation of the state of the art JK/SK rooms and play area and washrooms have freshened up the look of St. Louis school and attracted families from various parts of our community which in turn has increased enrollment. This was all done by funding provided by this Catholic School board and the Ministry.

Cardinal Carter, built back in 1993, is the only Catholic Highschool in the Leamington and surrounding area, and is said to be fewer than 75% utilized with an enrollment of 560 students. There are 5 Catholic Elementary Families of Schools ranging from Essex, to Kingsville and to Leamington under the CC umbrella. What offerings does the school have to entice students to attend and to continue to grow their Faith in the Catholic Education? What programs can make this school stand out from competing Public Highschools in the area such as Kingsville High and Leamington High? It is what is offered at the school level where students decide which secondary school to attend. We need to bring in exciting, specialized programs that not only enhance the students education but to also enhance their overall perception of the school.

Creating a middle school at Cardinal Carter Highschool for the grade 7s and 8s seems like a logical decision so that students will continue their Catholic Faith within a Catholic Highschool. In speaking with parents of the community, they feel strongly that these children should not be within a highschool setting and have threatened to pull their kids into a public board where they can complete their education. We understand that this has worked in schools within the city, but the tight-knit family dynamics in a county school is different. Students from the highschool are also concerned about losing out on current offerings that their school provides them if these grade 7 and 8 students take up space within their school.

The community took a big hit with the closure of Heinz with hundreds of people losing their jobs. The community is now just starting to rebuild itself. The town is trying to build up the job industry to attract families of all areas of the world. Please do not make a decision prematurely. Let the community continue to unfold. Over the last year we've had families migrate from all areas of the world to our small town community. Our community is growing. We need to be able to accommodate and provide to existing families as well as new families entering this community and we do that by giving them options.

To conclude, all the ARC review will do is question "What if?" What if we amalgamate schools – will that increase enrollment? What if we create a middle school at Cardinal Carter – will that increase enrollment? What if we close St. Louis School – will all the families remain within the Catholic Board?

All the answers to the "What if" above is "We don't know." I once read in an article – "It is time we start challenging the language of percent occupied and replace it with school effectiveness...That is what our children and families deserve."

I am proposing to not disrupt the lives of hundreds of families of our community for the ARC to only consider what is in the best interest of the Board and not in the best interest of each individual family of schools. Elementary school registration begins in February - how can these processes be completed to be able to have parents enroll their children in one of our Catholic Elementary Schools. If this ARC review passes, you will be finding parents registering their kids in the Public Board. Because they don't want to deal with the "What ifs". In today's Windsor Star article, Mr. Picard states and I quote "I don't see us having to do any more of these reviews after this, barring unforeseen circumstances." The circumstances are right in front of us. Families are like employees and you are our employers. When you upset an employee enough, they change jobs. When you upset families over and over again within such a small community, they switch school boards. On every corner you turn in Leamington, you practically see a public grade school. If you vote yes for the ARC review, you are limiting the exposure of the Catholic schools within the heart of the community.

These are not assumptions. These are proven facts. Are you willing to take a chance of losing more students to the Public Board by following through with an ARC?

If you are willing to take that chance then vote yes for the review. But I can guarantee that you are all sitting here today wondering a small ounce of "What if this doesn't work?" and in that case, please trust in our Faith, a Faith that we want to keep within our schools, a Faith we want to continue to grow and vote NO for the ARC review process. Give these families hope in our small community and let them build their trust in our Catholic system again. Let them know that they are heard.

Remember that this solution can also create a greater problem. Thank you!