June 18, 2018

Dear Mme Marie-France Lapierre, Présidente du conseil d'administration du CSF

A neighbourhood school is an important expression of care - care for our children, care for our community, and care for our future. It says a great deal when a neighbourhood school is known to be inadequate; yet is deliberately neglected, and left to deteriorate and decay. This is the situation at École Océane in Nanaimo, BC.

The problems at École Océane are well known to the faculty, to the parents and to the Ministry, though they bear repeating here:

- There is an inadequate complement of qualified personnel, resulting in students in the care of inappropriately trained staff;
- There is insufficient space to safely provide for the needs of the student body and staff; and
- The condition of the facility is poor and deteriorating, putting the health and safety of students and staff at risk.

Each of these problems are significant in their own right, but it is the condition of the facility that poses the greatest and most immediate risk to students and staff and by extension to the Ministry of Education. The presence of lead in the water, asbestos in the walls, rodents in the building and the overall dysfunction of the HVAC system are appalling. The inability to safely provide for the needs of students and staff is unacceptable. The abandonment of any plan to rectify these known health and safety issues would be negligent.

As a concerned parent, I strongly support the actions proposed by the school's Parent Association (APE), namely:
- To reestablish priority status for a new building to house École Océane on its existing property; and
- To work in partnership with the CSF to develop an immediate and comprehensive action plan for a new school.

We are under no illusion that this is a quick or easy fix, but we do care about this school, and its future in our community, and we look forward to working with parents, faculty, the CSF and the Ministry to ensure a strong future for francophone education in Nanaimo.

With Respect,

Chris Midgley