

## Angela Hubbard

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**From:** RICHARD JOHNSON <rjohnson@oksd.wednet.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 26, 2016 3:11 PM  
**To:** 'Erik Swanson'; Dennis Rabidou; Perry Huston  
**Cc:** Yvette R. Hill; Pete Sirois; Marjorie Thompson; Kathie Brown; Dennis Carlton; Sheila Crowder; Jack Schneider; Ryan Christoph; Michael Porter; Joe LaGrou; Kathy Miller; David Kirk; Wayne Barrett; Guinevere Joyce; Ashley Goetz; Bob Shacklett; BRETT BAUM; Carrie Stokes; Nicole Kuchenbuch; Roy Johnson  
**Subject:** RE: Please Forward to the Okanogan County Commissioners - Juvenile Detention Facilities

Erik:  
I echo and applaud your letter. What you said needed to be said. With truth comes thoughtful and courageous action. You have given much truth, now we shall see if the commissioners will demonstrate thoughtful and courageous action.

Richard  
Dr. Richard Johnson, Superintendent  
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**Carpe Diem!** (Horace (65BC-8BC))

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**From:** Erik Swanson [<mailto:eswanson@omaksd.org>]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 26, 2016 3:04 PM  
**To:** [drabidou@co.okanogan.wa.us](mailto:drabidou@co.okanogan.wa.us); [phuston@co.okanogan.wa.us](mailto:phuston@co.okanogan.wa.us)  
**Cc:** RICHARD JOHNSON; Yvette R. Hill; Pete Sirois; Marjorie Thompson; Kathie Brown; Dennis Carlton; Sheila Crowder; Jack Schneider; Ryan Christoph; Michael Porter; Joe LaGrou; Kathy Miller; David Kirk; Wayne Barrett; Guinevere Joyce  
**Subject:** Please Forward to the Okanogan County Commissioners - Juvenile Detention Facilities  
**Importance:** High

Dear Commissioners,

I appreciate the difficulties we are encountering as we address the issues around aging facilities and budget challenges. The prospect of replacing buildings that are funded with public dollars does at some point lead to the necessity of passing a bond that at least 60% of the voting public will support. As the Superintendent of the Omak School District, I am very much aware of the challenges considering we will need to replace some facilities at a cost in excess of \$40 million in the very near future. Whether you believe it or not, that is the easy part.

When I say that replacing the buildings is the easy part, I am comparing that to replacing the kids. We could tell our families that, our school facilities are outdated so they can move to another community. That would solve the overcrowding issues, but what does it do to families? Here is what I am trying to get at – sending our offending youth to another community gets them out of an aging facility, but it also gets them out of sight, out of mind, out of their families, and into the prison pipeline. Is that what you are after here?

Some of our students have been in juvenile court and are struggling with a number of distractions and trauma in their lives. OBHC provides active mental health counseling services on all of our campuses. A significant number of the students served have been in custody and before juvenile court at one time or another. They are served at school, because their families have no means to take them for treatment. Moving them to a facility over 100 miles away could have a devastating affect on their lives and their families.

We need to keep our youth in our communities so that local resources and family members are available to help redirect them. Dealing with decaying buildings is a short term, and admittedly challenging bit of work, but abandoning young people is not acceptable under any circumstances. The questionable savings that may be achieved by outsourcing our children, pale in comparison to ruined lives and destroyed futures.

Leadership takes courage to go down the right path for the sake of the community. Buildings matter only to the extent that they serve the people, and budgets can be programmed to meet those needs. A Commission of committed leaders can find a way to renew or replace aging facilities and keep our children in our community. We cannot afford to loose even one child. Please partner with your local school districts in building futures for every child, not destroying lives and limiting futures.

Respectfully,

**ERIK SWANSON, PHD**  
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