



VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD

BOARD / COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at 7:00 PM,
Vancouver Technical Secondary School – Large Gymnasium
2600 East Broadway, Vancouver BC

REVISED AGENDA

The meeting is being held on the traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Coast Salish peoples.

- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Motion to Dissolve the Board Meeting into Committee of the Whole
- III. Vancouver MLAs (timed item 7:00-7:15 pm)
- IV. Delegations re: *2016/2017 Preliminary Budget Proposals*

Delegations will commence at 7:15 pm and will present at 5-minute intervals.

1. District Parents' Advisory Council (DPAC) – A. Dow and M. Sun
 2. Friends of the School Library (FOSL) – C. Bercic
 3. K. Stevens
 4. L. Scolah
 5. R. Hamm
 6. T. Teeninga
 7. B. Costin
 8. Parents, Prince of Wales Secondary School
 9. Point Grey Mini School Service Society – C. Young
 10. G. Singh
 11. A. Mattu
 12. S. or J. Richardson
 13. P. Morford
 14. Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia (CMEBC) – C. Reardon MacLellan
 15. Vancouver Symphony
 16. S. Pallister
 17. Parent Advocates for Gifted Education in Schools (PAGES) – M. Rodgers
 18. Gifted Education Students
 19. K. Sharma
 20. N. Kaur Dadwan
 21. D. Silver
 22. Sexsmith Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – G. Singh Sangha
 23. Point Grey Music Supporters Society – K. Carpenter
 24. A. Travers
 25. Vancouver Technical Music Council
 26. R. Kurth
 27. Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School's Music Council – X. Huang and members
 28. C. Truong
 29. Parent Advocacy Network - H. Legal
 30. K. Ayres
- V. Motion to Rise and Report from the Committee of the Whole
 - VI. Motion to Reconvene the Board Meeting
 - VII. Adjournment

Good evening trustees, management, staff, stakeholders, parents and guests:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address Vancouver Board of Education (VBE) staff's recommendations to the budget adjustments for the 2016 -2017 updated Preliminary Budget.

District Parents Advisory Council (DPAC) conducted our City-Wide meeting this past Thursday, April 7th. At that meeting only the 2016/2017 preliminary budget was available for discussion, not the updated one we now have in front of us. We were well aware that the ministry had added 28 million dollars to the province and School District 39 (Vancouver) was allotted 2.5 million to aid with the current shortfall.

At the meeting parent leaders discussed topics relating to the budget process we are now engaged, language used in the report, and content of the report (proposed cuts).

We understand the VBE shortfall, or anticipated deficit, for the 2016 - 2017 year was originally more than 27 million last week. The shortfall now stands at just under 25 million dollars, this week. A shortfall is caused when revenues are being outpaced by expenses (year over year). When the ministry extends additional funding, it is wonderful, more money for programs is always welcome. But when the ministry shares additional costs, costs that can and often outweigh the additional funding, the "downloading" of costs actually leaves us poorer.

(Capacity utilization + cost)
The group discussed the ministry's 95% enrollment expectation. We questioned the 95% as an appropriateness benchmark for the entire district. Also questioned was the modeling and calculation of the 95% benchmark. Space is being calculated, but teachers are not teaching to empty classrooms. Fewer children have been enrolling in Vancouver public schools each year for some years and we understand the downward trend is slowing. We all know Vancouver itself is growing and trends change and can change quickly.

Parents are here to promote and request that a specific program (or programs), slated to be being cut, be reconsidered.

It was judged amongst our group that saving of a specific program or programs should not influence decisions made on other program. Increased funding is truly required. To reverse a decisions to cut a program costs money, and more money is required.

As stated 2.5 million dollars was added back into the budget. Decisions by staff were made to adjust the preliminary budget proposals and we now have, the adjusted preliminary budget proposals. It was noted that parents and, for the most part, trustees are removed from decisions on what programs were to be adjusted. Our input today seems to be dependent on additional funding.

Moving to the content of the report, : Parents commented first on overall situations and then spoke to specific areas:

Concerns were raised over deferring maintenance. Schools schools slated for seismic upgrade have had maintenance deferred. But when the seismic upgrade is delayed, a school is left "to rot". This situation unduly influences parents within the schools community to consider their options. (independent schools, alternate arrangements, etc)

School consolidation was discussed: There are two school annex that are closing, but understand these schools are closing organically, Parents see the benefit of moving their children from a low utilized annex to a main school that can accommodate them: bigger library, more gym space etc. The school and community in each case were minimally affected. This situation has had little ~~if any~~ influence on the short term.

Parents spoke to some of the more egregious of the proposed adjustments. Parent leaders took issue with with a number of the cuts. Please remember our discussion occurred before staff adjustments were made and that some proposals have escaped the hatchet for this year.

- Elementary Strings (E 12.15 p 66)
- Special Education (E 18 p 81)
- Athletic Coordinator (E12.7 p57)
- Fine Arts and Performing Arts Coordinator (E12.8 p58)
- Literacy/Early Intervention Teacher Consultant (E12. 9 p59)
- Anti-Racism/Anti Homophobia Teacher Mentors (E12. 10 p60)
- SACY SSW (E12. 22 p75)
- Special Education Staffing (E14 p 77)
- Enhanced Services Literacy Teachers (E 17 p80)
- Special Education Support (E18 p 81)

Speaking to the ramification of cuts. Some ramifications are not immediately obvious. As an example: Cuts to the Elementary Strings program from last year were, as understood from the text, meant the grade four class of each school would have to wait one more year to begin, and time for the advanced strings 6 and 7 classes would be trimmed.

The reality is 11 of the 55 elementary schools strings program were dropped. Now, without any proposed funding, the remaining 44 are in peril of extinction.

Finally, from the meeting, there was a question raised regarding incorporating some of this year's anticipated surplus into this year's budget. Understood that in previous years, the year end surplus became internally restricted to cover future years' anticipated shortfall. This appears to be one of the contentious aspects from the EY report, that is being incorporated.

Representatives of District Parents (DPAC) applaud staff and trustees for trying everything they can. Hopefully we will be looking at a brighter future .very soon.

Lastly, Somewhere, somehow "A" tree was shaken last week and 2.5 million appeared. Perhaps somewhere, somehow "A" tree needs to be shaken few more times.

Thank you.
Mabel Sun (Chair) and Alex Dow (Treasurer)
District Parents Advisory Council (DPAC)

**Friends of the School Library
(FOSL)**

Presentation to Trustees

April 12th, 2016

Carrie Bercic, Megan Crouch, Natalie & Clarice Radke

Friends of the School Library greatly appreciates this opportunity to speak about school libraries and teacher-librarians. We represent hundreds of parents, educators, and library advocates from schools across Vancouver.

My Name is Carrie Bercic. I have two children that have gone through the public school system and I am the current Friends of the School Library Chair. I have been a school library and teacher-librarian advocate in the district for over 18 years. My name is Megan Crouch and I have two children at Dickens — one in grade 2 and the other in Kindergarten. My name is Natalie Hamilton and I have 2 exceptional children at Tyee, one in Grade 1 and one in Grade 4. This is my daughter, Clarice.

Clarice: “My school library is more than just books! It is crawling with kids because of Miss Evans, my school librarian. She is a resource that I use almost every day. Miss Evans helps me find books as well as information on the computer for school research projects and novel studies. She always has interesting recommendations for fun reading too. I can’t imagine my library without Miss Evans! Please save teacher librarians.”

We recognize that due to systemic provincial underfunding we find ourselves in a dire situation as a district, and as a result, difficult decisions must be made. However, FOSL implores you to reconsider the proposed cuts to school libraries and teacher-librarians. The proposed cuts hit the very heart of what remains of our school-library programs. School libraries, like everything else in the district have suffered from over a decade of cuts. We cannot take anymore.

FOSL has asked every year to have a minimum level of teacher-librarian staffing established in order to address the inequity we see across the district. We were very dismayed to see that instead of addressing this issue E19 specifically states: **“Another implication of reducing this non-enrolling staffing is that schools may not have the ability to have specialized school librarians.”** We were, however, happy to see that the board acknowledged the specialized nature of the teacher-librarian position. It is, in fact a very specialized job.

The school-library is more than just a place for our children to check out books. It is a place where they go to learn critical research skills, find resources for projects and assignments, get help choosing an exciting or inspirational book to read, or sign on to the computer and learn about digital safety – all guided by the teacher-librarian.

Of particular concern is how the proposed cuts to the school library will affect the implementation of the new curriculum. Teacher-librarians have always taken a lead role in schools around digital literacy, online safety, and teaching research skills to students, all while collaborating very closely with classroom teachers. **However, the new curriculum is more focused on inquiry-based learning in all grades and subject areas than ever before.** Who will be taking this critical leadership role in guiding students and staff through this process in schools where there is no teacher-librarian? We cannot expect classroom teachers to take on yet another critical component of students' learning without support. As well, the proposed cut to the Teacher-Librarian mentor will make this process even more difficult. The mentor provides district support to all teacher-librarians. These are cuts that will directly and indirectly impact curriculum delivery in a very harmful way.

FOSL would like to stress that if literacy – print, technological, and cultural – is truly a priority in this district and this province, school libraries must be kept open all day, adequately stocked with books and e-resources, equipped with the necessary technology, and properly staffed with qualified teacher-librarians to support both students and staff.

All students in the district deserve the same opportunities and resources to ensure their success. Please reconsider all of the proposed budget recommendations that negatively impact school-libraries, E3, E7, E12.5 and particularly E19.

Thank you.

VSB 2016-2017 Budget Meeting

April 12, 2016

Presentation regarding budget cuts to the Vancouver Home Learner's Program by Kerith Stevens

I've come here to speak tonight about the Vancouver Home Learner's Program. This is a unique program that has seen much growth in the 4 years that my family has been a part of it. I know that there are going to be some other wonderful speakers tonight that will tell the story of how this program has positively affected their children and my own family's story mirrors much of what they will say. What I would like to bring to the table are my insights as to role this program plays in the home learning and distributed learning community and how it benefits not just individual students like my children, but also the Vancouver School Board.

As a parent and educator who is active in this city's home learning and distributed learning community, I have spent a lot of time talking with friends, neighbours, acquaintances, and other parents in the community about the educational options we have in this city. Many parents I've talked to are looking to be more involved in their children's learning or have children who are struggling and are looking for a way to personalize their child's learning more than is possible in a regular school program. These are the type of people whose children are currently in or waitlisted for the Vancouver Home Learners Program. From the discussions that I've had, I can assure you that if this program gets dramatically cut, their children are not going to remain in our Vancouver schools. They will move to other distributed learning programs and the VSB will lose many students.

Right now the Vancouver Home Learners Program is keeping students in our district. It provides the personalized learning many students need but are not able to find in other programs. It also sticks out from other distributed learning programs in other districts because it provides two full days of programming incorporating theme-based, integrated learning for students from Kindergarten to grade 7. It can offer what other distributed learning programs cannot - for example, access to intramural sports, band (as long as our wonderful band and strings program isn't cut as well), and field trips. It provides a bridge for our younger students who aren't quite ready for full-day kindergarten, but who after a year or two may be confident and ready to enter a full-time program with their peers.

Two years ago the Vancouver School Board seemed to realize the potential of this program when they moved it to a school with more room to accommodate growth - growth which has happened. More and more families are interested in home learning, but many of them also want the support teachers and a learning community and the Vancouver Home Learners Program provides both. When my daughter started 4 years ago there wasn't even talk of a waitlist, now - solely through word-of-mouth -- we have a growing waitlist. When my daughter started

there were hardly any intermediate students, today she is in a busy classroom that has grown throughout the year. This growth cannot continue to happen with just one teacher. The number of program days will drop, this program will no longer hold its unique place, and families interested in pursuing this type of educational program will leave the VSB entirely for other programs in other districts or for full-time home learning.

I hope I have helped you see tonight how, contrary to being a drag on the district's funding, this program offers the district a way to explore different educational models and keep and even increase student numbers going forward.

I urge you to reconsider your planned cuts to this program and to continue to support it with two full-time teaching positions.

Delegate No. 4

Leanne Scolah - Vancouver Home Learners

Thank you for allowing us to come and speak about our children and tell our personal stories. I was so excited to register my son for K in the Vancouver Home Learners program, only to be told there was a waiting list, and a long one. Why would funding be taken away from a program that parents are lining up for their children to be in, with interest growing weekly? Everytime I tell a parent about this program, they say "I wish I would have known about it". **Vancouver needs to grow progressive programs like these because we are a progressive city and every child is unique.**

I can't speak fully about a program my son has yet to attend, but why is its popularity growing? Time does not permit me to even start on the benefits of the home & family based learning portion. For our family, there are 2 additional reasons:

1. As far as I've heard – and correct me if I'm wrong for I wasn't a parent back then - **nobody asked parents** whether they all wanted full-day K, or whether it was **beneficial for all children**. And it was **not** brought in electorally. For young children for whom full-time school is not a good fit (and it's a story we keep hearing around this city – young kids not coping well, overwhelmed by long days, exhausted by every day attendance, traumatized with anxiety) this is a wonderful alternative. **Its either this...or disrupting full-time classes by pulling our kids out half way through the day, or enrolling our kids in other districts (which are operating similar programs in Vancouver).**
2. The mainstream classroom does not work for every child. Maybe if I share how this program fits my eldest child, some parents can relate.

My 4 year old is basically teaching himself to read and do sums. The house is full of his science experiments. While I do not think he is exceptionally gifted, he's definitely going to be a quirky kid who finds school **too easy. Boring perhaps. Or he'll end up teacher's helper** (speaking from my own childhood experience) or ostracized and bullied. Some kids need program like this to thrive, where they can be **honoured to work at their own pace**. Grow laterally and be challenged. And reach their **potential** – in both the home/family based learning portion, and in the project-based group learning environment under the direction of a dedicated VSB educator.

So please, make education fit diverse families and unique children in Vancouver. Some parents work non-typical hours and would barely see their children if they were in a mainstream classroom. Many children cannot survive a typical learning environment. We should be growing the Vancouver Home Learners program. **Its rich and progressive. There's so much value in it. And instead of losing dozens of current and future students to other districts offering similar programs, it will keep enrollment in Vancouver.**

VSB Budget Presentation April 2016

When our kids first started school we were thrilled to enroll them in our local public school and had a great experience for the most part. We had debated homelearning for one main reason: my wife taught music after school and wanted to have more time with them. As we went through the public system we began to realize that one of our children was not getting the individual education her teaching style required and the impetus for homelearning grew. Eventually we learned about the homelearners program because a good friend was in it, and when it moved to Beaconsfield (which is much closer to us) we took the opportunity to join.

Whenever we tell our friends about our hybrid homelearners program, where our kids are engaged with VSB teachers two days a week and with us at home for three - we get one of two responses - 1) they've never heard that such a thing exists and 2) many wish they had heard of it much sooner. We experienced that we had enough margin in our lives to have our kids for three days and could finally live our dream of homelearning alongside supportive teachers. Many others feel the same. We know this as enrollment is rising.

If we drop the program to one teacher, I fear that it will spell the end to an alternative teaching program that the Board should be promoting, if only to show that it is willing to try new things, never mind providing a critical program for all the students and parents that feel lost in the regular system.

I'm so impressed that the School Board has walked with homelearners in this way and do not want to see this relationship move backwards

Randy Hamm

My name is Bill Costin. My daughter, Olivia, is a grade 2 student of the Home Learners Program at Lord Beaconsfield Elementary. Olivia started in Kindergarten when it was at Garibaldi Elementary in 2013. She has had Shannon Hobson and Juliana Lee for all three years of her education. I asked Olivia to say why she likes the program. "There are good teachers and lots of friends. There are no frowns on the kid's faces unless someone falls down."

Our family has chosen the Vancouver Home Learners program for a few reasons.

- Kindergarten is not an all day, 5 days per week program. Our family was not sending our 5 year old off for 30 hours per week of education. We weren't asked to do that when we were 5. That was not an option. The Vancouver Home Learners Program is a great collaborative, inclusive community of learning and support two days per week.
- Our work schedules do not match school hours. I work afternoons as a piano teacher. My wife teaches dance with a similar schedule. If Olivia went to school on a regular school schedule, we wouldn't see her Monday to Friday from 9am until bedtime at 9pm. This is not good parenting. Because of this, we continued into grade 1, and now grade 2. We want an intuitive child-parent bond in our family to help her with her sense of right and wrong. Under this program, we spend quality time with her during daytime school hours when we have the time. In a traditional school setting, combined with our work hours, Olivia would be more open to her peers replacing her parents as her source of contact and security especially in the years to come. We don't want that. Olivia has friends yes, but children leading children regarding values, identity and behavior, no. Vancouver Home Learners offers flexibility for us to partner with the public education system that is unique to our family's needs.
- A third and not least reason is that Olivia loves her teachers, and she gets these same teachers every year until grade 7. I would like to read a quote from the Waldorf School website as to why this is good:

Between the ages of seven and fourteen, children learn best through acceptance and emulation of authority, just as in their earlier years they learned through imitation. In elementary school, particularly in the lower grades, the child is just beginning to expand his or her experience beyond home and family. The class becomes a type of "family" as well, with its own authority figure - the teacher - in a role analogous to parent.

With this approach, the students and teachers come to know each other very well, and the teacher is able to find over the years the best ways of helping individual children in their schooling. The class teacher also becomes like an additional family member for most of the families in his/her class.

This is also a very important relationship as the child moves through puberty.

It's worth noting that this approach was the norm in the days of the "little red schoolhouse".

If we lost a teacher over the recent budget cuts, it would be like a death to Olivia and our family.

This is how the program works, and what the teachers do for their pay:

- At program capacity with two teachers, there are 60 individual learning plans written for 60 different families at 7 different grade levels. Each family meets individually with a teacher for one hour at the beginning of the school year. This dialogue continues throughout the year with each family for each individual learning level and goal by email, outside of classroom, and on Fridays during regular classroom months.

Students receive funds for curricular materials, supplies and courses that they need to do actual home learning when the children aren't in the classroom with the teachers.

Behind the scenes work by teachers:

- Funds are managed by approving each curricular material or course. The teachers must do this and not an administrator. An administrator is not going to know what individual requirement is for a student. The school board wants the funds to be managed closely and efficiently. This can only be done by a teacher. I can't speak for all families as to how much time is taken. We as parents have purchased in the past maps, a world globe, art supplies, and readers etc. Registration of physical activities are important because of the lack thereof in the classroom schedule.
For Olivia we currently do math on the website: Kahn Academy, trampoline, ukelele, ballet, jazz, and tap dance classes, badminton, Shakespeare theatre workshops, teaching my own child piano, and study time at the Vancouver Library. We taught her to read with help from the phone app "Hooked On Phonics". When Olivia asked for the next level (it's kind of like a combination of a video game and Sesame Street), I told her she had finished the level and now she has to read books. Example: We requested a trampoline course and were turned down because of the risk to injury. We pay for half of these items ourselves.
- The teachers have to be up on the latest home learning curriculum including digital materials and what is available and or needed for each particular child at every grade level K to 7 so that these materials can be made aware to the parents.
- The K to 7 component combined with mentoring multiple families is an enormous task for one teacher.
- The nature of this program generates constant inquiry calls on a daily basis. The teachers are constantly talking to new families to see if it's the right fit for them. New families want to talk about the program. The calls are transferred to the teachers. Administration at Lord Beaconsfield can not handle these calls, the teachers do.

- Ministry rules: the students can't be fully registered until they have a student learning plan and their activation assignment handed in which is marked and is 5 percent of the student's yearly grade. They don't receive these two items until they meet with their teacher in September. With the student numbers we have today, one teacher could not start a classroom schedule until well into October. There are also portfolio meetings three times per year. Each portfolio session would push the classroom time to a minimum. We are talking about losing 1 month of classroom time if we lost a teacher even at the number of students we have today.
- There is much more parent communication in this program than a regular classroom. This is not conceivable unless you are involved. The teachers are working one on one with the parents as well as the students. (EXAMPLES)
- There is a lot of process for the teachers. It's not like a regular classroom.
 - HANDBOOK,
 - INTERMEDIATE ACTIVATION ASSIGNMENT (Gr 3-7: there are others for K – 2)
 - ORIGINAL PROPOSAL
- Fridays is for tutoring, meeting with families, and intake meetings. Grade sevens will come to school to use the microscopes, or a child struggling in math will come in for extra help. There are meetings with families, and with prospective families. The principal would normally handle this, but this program is unique and not easily explained without the teacher at hand.
- This program is hands on, experiential project based learning. A large part of the program is field trips: much more than regular classrooms. This is how home learners learn. Teachers plan and arrange 20 field trips per year: 10 for each group, and there is funding and co-ordination with the facilities to manage for each trip.
- From day one of this program, it was stated that as students grow, teachers will be added and the program will keep growing.
- The program was sent to Beaconsfield to grow.
 - LETTER FROM SPECIAL PROGRAMS.
 - This letter was an out and out lie. Shame on the board for trying to scam the parents. You have to stop this. This is insulting. In the future, you need to come clean, and tell us what you are doing instead of hiding it. We have been beaten up in the last couple of years.
 - We lost people because of the move but we finally have a classroom that looks like an intermediate classroom, and now we are put on the cutting board. There are 15+ on the waiting list for the program.
- Currently there is 16 in one classroom and 22 in the other class. You are looking at numbers and thinking one teacher can handle 38 students.

- For normal programs registration is opened in November and parents are told if they are in or not. Home learners is not doing that at this time which means parents could be thinking if I'm not in, and only on a waiting list, I better look elsewhere. The program can't tell families they have a spot if there is only going to be one teacher here. We are in a holding pattern now which doesn't help the numbers. It's a frustrating position.
- Putting one teacher into the program as it is now with 38 students in the classrooms will be a recipe for teacher burnout. Parents will get upset with the teacher because of less accessibility.

Here is a program which is successfully serving the needs of families in Vancouver by providing a mix of flexibility and engagement. It's not expensive, and shouldn't be treated as a pawn in a political game. Leave it alone, promote it, protect it from similar satellite operations like Island Discovery (a New West School District home learners group operating in Vancouver) nearby, and it will grow.

Sincerely,

Bill Costin
Parent, Vancouver Home Learners.

**Prince of Wales Secondary Input to VSB Trustees on the 2016-17 Budget Proposal
Presented on Tuesday April 12, 2016 at the Vancouver Technical Secondary School**

My name is Doug Campbell.

I am the parent of a Prince of Wales Secondary (PW) Mini School student.

I am making my best effort to speak for the 1,300 PW students and their parents.

PW is located near the intersection of King Edward and Arbutus streets, surrounded by and in some ways competing with Vancouver's leading private schools – St Georges, Crofton, and York House.

More than 25% of PW students are ELL, and 27% of its enrollment is cross boundary, which is the largest in Vancouver. This presents a real challenge to nurture inclusion and belonging, which are especially important to learning in adolescent years.

The main school and mini school are on opposite sides of the campus, separated by two parking lots and sports fields. This separation is not large for mobile young students, but is very significant for admin staff that must deal with voluminous paper records.

Next year's budget plans to eliminate all admin staff support in the PW Mini School.

Subsequent to a similar cut in 2004, the Head Teacher ended up resigning due to stress. This almost resulted in the closure of the Mini. Reinstatement of some admin support saved the school but since the reinstatement support has been cut back in recent years.

Today, before the planned elimination of Mini admin staff, and because of cut-backs in Mini admin support in recent years, the Head Teacher is under more stress than at the time of the Mini's near-death experience in 2004.

Currently the Head Teacher is barely managing, thanks to his 10 years' experience in the position, and because of a mandatory Grade 12 Leadership course that results in Mini students helping to administer school activities.

Clearly the elimination of Mini admin staff next year will ultimately result in the end of the PW Mini School, which has operated very successful for 43 years.

What would the impact be?

Without the program a significant fraction of the 150 students would be at risk of being bullied or ostracized, as they had previously experienced.

And just about all the students would significantly under-achieve.

But so what, you may ask?

Well there are further implications. Mini students are leaders in PW. They lead clubs, sports, spirit events, and many other activities. This is a significant part of the reason why PW is successful even with its 25% ELL and 27% out of catchment enrollment.

And Mini student contribution extends beyond the school. Community service is an obligatory part of the program. Each year students do more than 5,000 hours of service. Students learn to be community leaders that give back throughout their lives.

Also, financially, the Mini gives back far more than its incremental cost.

For example, this year more than \$39,000 of computer equipment was purchased with Mini fund raising money.

And PW Mini alumni have created a growing endowment fund managed by the Vancouver Foundation, which is already almost a six-figure amount. Income from this fund helps economically disadvantaged students enroll and fully participate in the Mini program.

So elimination of all Mini admin support to save approximately \$24,000 is false savings. In fact, the cut would create greater expenses, along with the loss of all of the other benefits resulting from the PW Mini School program.

On behalf of the Prince of Wales School community, I ask that support to the PW Mini School not be reduced if at all possible.

In conclusion, PW parents realize the provincial government is systemically underfunding public education in BC and parents are aggressively advocating with the government for additional funding.

Thank you for your attention.

To conclude the Prince of Wales School input, a student will now present his thoughts.

My name is Haske Sumaila.

I am the president of the Prince of Wales Mini School this year.

Prince of Wales Mini is a program that aims to provide an intellectually enriched environment for motivated students, and the value of my mini school experience has been immense.

Our annual Science Fair taught me the value of the scientific process. Taking charge of a community service project developed my leadership skills, and our Volunteering program taught me to take pride in donating my time to others, and giving back.

This is where the true value of the Mini school lies.

I feel that the diversity of the events that we are exposed to at the mini encourage us not only to develop personally, but to take those skills and use them to make those around us better. The Mini creates leaders, and there's no better example of that than Sophie Harrison.

She developed Kids for Climate Action, an initiative that aims to hold governments accountable for the impact that their actions have on the environment. The group was built by Mini School students, and is an excellent example of how the Mini encourages its students to give back and to be leaders.

At the mini, we are given the building blocks to make ourselves better, make others better and try to make the world better. The impact of the mini school ripples outwards and touches every corner of this neighbourhood, and the \$24,000 that will be saved by eliminating the secretary position at our school will pale in comparison to what is lost if the voice of mini school students dissolves away.

The motto of our school is "Omnis Partis Refferret", meaning that all the pieces matter, and this is especially true in the case of our part-time secretary, Ms. Uppal. Without her, our puzzle falls apart, and the presence of our students will no longer be working to make Vancouver a better place.

Thank you.

Presentation to the VSB Trustees, Tuesday April 12, 2016
Vancouver Technical Secondary School

My name is Cindy Young

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the budget discussion on behalf of Point Grey Mini School, a district program that accepts students from every catchment in Vancouver. We recognize the difficult position that the VSB is in, and are aware that some of you have talked of resigning or being fired over this budget. Thank you for advocating for families in our community. Our Mini parents are writing Victoria to ask for more funding for education.

I am here today because the proposed budget has marked for elimination our half time Office Support Staff worker. We want to thank you for not taking away PG Mini's teacher planning blocks and we infer from that, that you value the Mini and want it to continue. At a time when you are having to lay off teachers and make cuts to many valued programs, it is awkward to ask to keep our half time office worker, however, this job is essential to our program. We don't believe that our program can continue in anything more than name without some office support.

You might think that Kay's Office Support B position is fairly generic and could be covered by our main school. But they are already stretched very thin. And even if they had the time to do it, they likely couldn't because you really need to have an intimate knowledge of the Mini community and to be located in the Mini school itself. In addition to typical office tasks, Kay helps process about 400 applications to the Mini School every year, and she phones about one hundred applicants to invite them to interviews. As well, she is key to arranging the field trips that are essential to our enrichment philosophy, and this requires the ability to manage transportation, accommodation, equipment, waivers, consents, fees, and medical forms for 150 students and volunteers, some with serious medical conditions.

2016/17 Budget Presentation to VSB by Cindy Young, Point Grey Mini School

Without office support, field trips will be eliminated and responsibility for student selection will have to be turned over to the school board and this will instantly kill our program because it is essential that our teachers select students by reading the applications and then interviewing likely candidates in person. You can't identify kids who would thrive at PG Mini simply based on test scores. Our program works for a certain quirky, out of the box kind of student who might be passionate in some areas but not necessarily top of their elementary school class in every area. And part of the reason why we don't just pick the students who have the highest scores is that academically able children are often underachievers when they are not sufficiently challenged. Some students who come to us have been deeply unhappy in school. These students are at risk for dropping out if they don't have the challenge or support they need. That is a known risk for gifted learners, and it is one of the reasons that enrichment programs like ours were created.

Some assume that PG Mini is an accelerated program or has a special focus such as technology, where if field trips and community aspects were eliminated, the program would still be enriched. But that's not the case. The Mini was founded on the philosophy that community itself is enrichment, where individuals are supported in pursuing their own passions and sharing them with each other so that students, essentially, enrich each other. Some are artists, or mathematicians, poets, or scientifically minded, but our goal is that after five years our poets will be poets who love math, our scientists will love poetry, and our mathematicians will love to argue politics. Our enrichment excursions don't take us far afield, but it is outside the classroom that students find the best opportunities to learn collaboratively, lead workshops, and become family.

About 25 percent of our students suffer from anxiety or eating disorders, serious health problems, have previously been bullied, or are designated gifted and learning disabled. The Mini school acts as a group IEP for these students, which has got to be the most cost efficient way of delivering an IEP.

We know that your challenge is to try to stretch a dollar further than you've ever had to stretch it in the past. Reinstating office support at the Mini means continuing to provide the programming that 150 students from all across Vancouver need in order to flourish.

Now I'd like to introduce Linnea Teichroeb, a grade 12 student at Point Grey Mini

Linnea Teichroeb:

Standing here in front of all of you today, I can confidently say that I am a changed person because of Point Grey mini. From an outsiders perspective, it may not be apparent that the mini school is so much more than just an academically enriched program, but it is. This program has given me leadership skills, life skills, the ability to empathize, help others and most importantly it has given me a safe place filled with comfort, support and acceptance that I have been unable to find elsewhere. You see, in grades 4 and 5 I was bullied for being different. I was confident and quirky. I even rode a unicycle to school everyday. But I soon realized that people enjoy putting others down when they're happy and out going. By the time I got to grade 7 I was pretending to be stupid, for fear that I'd be shunned and ridiculed for being interested in school. And, admittedly, I was curious – the teacher even limited me to five questions a day. Not to sound overly melodramatic, but everything changed when I joined the mini. Instead of feeling out of place, I finally fit in. I started to make friends, best friends that I still have to this day. I started to regain confidence in myself and I began to finally overcome the insecurities that were so ingrained into me. Now I stand before you, not only as a Grade 12 student, who desperately hopes that you'll continue to fully fund her school, but also as a young woman that feels like she'd be lost without it. We need mini schools to keep people like me, people who are quirky and different, engaged in school and away from bullying. Although the mini may be competitive, it's my home, and the same people that compete against me every day, are also the ones that support me and help push me to be my best self.

Good evening, my name is Gurmit Sangha. I am the Parent Advisory Council Chair at Sexsmith Elementary School. Sexsmith is geographically located in an area of Vancouver where there is a large concentration of South Asian families. I am here to advocate for the South Asian Multicultural Liaison Worker position which is being eliminated. Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

Multicultural liaison workers are a cultural and linguistic bridge between home and school. New or recent immigrants often have difficulties finding their place in a new society. They struggle for many years both culturally and financially. Often both parents need to work and generally are only able to get lower paying jobs and tend to work long hours. They struggle to stay involved in their children's lives both in and after school. These parents do not understand how the school system works as it is very different from what they are used to. They generally feel that they do not have the education or skillset to help their children with the educational and cultural issues that the children face, both in and outside of school.

Multicultural liaison workers are essential advocates for these families. They help parents understand the school system and the importance of active involvement in their children's education and the schools their children attend. They provide knowledge of the resources available in the community and help families connect with them. These workers provide cultural counselling, helping both the school and the parents understand what the issues are and why they occur. They help deal with issues of racism and discrimination.

The needs of families have become more complex as they are facing new challenges everyday with the social and technological changes occurring in our society. The presence of the multicultural liaison workers in the schools allows them to help intervene as early as possible. There are emergency situations from time to time when a multicultural worker needs to be involved immediately. They help the families understand the urgency of particular situations and provide support during traumatic events. They are a channel of clear communication between home and school. The fears, questions and concerns of the families are clearly communicated to school staff.

Often adding additional complexity to the role of the multicultural worker is the cultural handicap that some immigrant families have in understanding that their children may have special needs. Helping parents understand psycho-educational assessments and making informed choices is part of their job. It can be extremely upsetting and frustrating for parents to find out that their child has learning difficulties/special needs. Immigrant families do not understand the system and cannot advocate for

their children to secure support from special needs staff. Multicultural workers work with the parents so that they understand the unique needs of their children and they advocate for the families so that their children get the right support in a timely fashion.

Multicultural liaison workers also promote cultural education for all students through showcasing students' talent in special assemblies for the whole school. This helps many students develop self-esteem and confidence. We have a wonderful Diwali celebration in our school with ethnic food and dance which is not possible without the effort of our multicultural liaison worker

Multicultural liaison workers also run workshops for school staff. Many school staff do not understand the family dynamics of South Asian families and multicultural liaison workers play a key role in bridging this gap. Extended families are often the norm in the South Asian community and there are many challenges associated with this. The multicultural liaison workers deal with all members of the family, for example grandparents and uncle and aunts, for the benefit of the children.

Multicultural liaison workers provide education on the issue of gangs and drugs and the violence and consequences that come from associating with them. As you have likely heard the City of Surrey is in the midst of dealing with these issues. They have added 93 additional police officers for enforcement purposes. With the violence not decreasing the City is talking about community involvement and earlier intervention with youth. This is what multicultural liaison workers do.

It is nice to see the politicians engage in community events to provide support for the communities. There tends to be the promise of more resources at these events. If the proposed cut goes through, then only two multicultural liaison workers will be supporting the entire district's South Asian community. Unfortunately they will be stretched thin and may not be able to provide adequate services to the entire community. It is also very important for the South Asian community that both female and male workers are there to provide these vital services to families. With the proposed cut, the services of the one female worker will be cut. This would be unfortunate as it will create an additional gap in the provision of these services.

In closing I would like to reiterate the value and importance of the role that multicultural liaison workers provide in both our school systems and in our communities. I implore you to reconsider and retain the position of the multicultural liaison worker. Thank you.

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Good evening Respected Trustees and everyone present here,

My name is Amrit. My two sons attend public school in Vancouver. I am here with my husband, my children, my mother-in-law and my sister's family. Gagan also attended Vancouver public schools and now she is working full time.

I can understand a lot of English but cannot speak English, so Chaman is here to help me.

Chaman: The following presentation conveys the thoughts of my whole family but especially my aunt's experiences of the services provided by South Asian Multicultural Liaison Worker. We are here to talk about why services of the Multicultural Workers are extremely valuable for our family and our community. There should be no cut at all.

I am going to talk about:

What is working well for me as far as my children's education and upbringing is concerned?

Why is it working well?

I have been working with the Multicultural Worker for over 4 years.

I came from a rural part of India with very little English and after coming here I started working immediately.

When my older son started Kindergarten, I did not know the Canadian School system at all. My thinking was that education is school's responsibility like it was back home when I was growing up in India.

In my mind, my job was to make sure that he is safe and well taken care of. I was too busy making a living and also taking care of my younger son. My husband started work early in the morning and came in the evening.

First time I met my son's teacher was at Parent Teacher conferences and listened to her concerns for my child with the help of a translator but I did not know what role I could play as I did not know the system and the language.

When he was in grade 1, we moved to another school. I was having a difficult time in helping my child learn. He was behind in academics. We did not speak any English at home and we had no communication with school because of the language barrier. This year again, at Parent Teacher Conference, his grade 1 teacher expressed her concerns about him and this time I had school's Multicultural Worker explaining to me what the teacher's concerns were and what should be done. That was the start of my liaison with the school's multicultural worker.

I realized very soon that I was connected to a very knowledgeable resource. She had full understanding of the society I was born and brought up in. She understood my cultural values and beliefs and at the same time equally competent in Canadian culture and values. Having worked with Vancouver School Board for a number of years, she had extensive knowledge of the school system. I could not have asked for more. I was now very confident of coming to school. I was meeting this worker on a regular basis as well as the school staff.

I, like all parents, want the best for my kids. My topmost priority is that my children should be good citizens of the society they are growing in.

I am very aware of Gang and Drug violence in our community. South Asian gangs are constantly in the headlines. I know some young people within our family who are on the wrong path and it breaks my heart. I am determined that my children should never fall into this trap. I am therefore, working very hard to remain connected with my children.

To achieve this, Multicultural worker meets with me regularly and thus keeps communication with the school going. My children challenge me all the time. They think that since I do not know much English, so I am not very smart. But that is not the case as I am also learning at the same time.

I am learning new parenting skills in these meetings with the Multicultural Worker which are important in this fast changing world. ~~Earlier I cannot discipline them using physical~~ ~~punishment~~. I use patience now, whereas earlier, I used to get very angry. Now I first calm myself and then talk to my children and deal with their problems.

Living with extended family has benefits as well as drawbacks. Grandparents have different parenting styles. Sometimes, these create lots of issues and tensions in our household. Our children get affected negatively.

I requested Multicultural worker to have meetings with my mother-in-law as well. Even though my husband comes home late, we made arrangements for him to be also present at few meetings. In other words, I got help in all areas.

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Monday, April 11th 2016

To: Vancouver School Board Trustees, Superintendent, and Minister of Education:

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From: Shane & Jennifer Richardson
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Re: Perceived budgetary underfunding: Committee of the Whole Meetings, April 2016.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to speak with you on this matter, in a public setting. My wife and I feel very passionately about this issue. Jennifer wanted to speak at this meeting; however she is nearly eight months pregnant, so I am standing in her stead. Our understanding is that

the Crown has reduced funding for education, and school closures and service reductions are slated based on newly formulated capacity ratios.

We in particular are not participating in a traditional programme with the Vancouver School Board. We are home learners, and registered with the Vancouver School Board's Beaconsfield Home Learners' Programme. The student to teacher ratio and proposed class size proportions are inconsistent with this VSB's own writings on this subject (located on your website at <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/programs/home-learners>), which clearly states "In the Home Learner's Programme, a high degree of parent participation in the student's learning, and collaboration with your teacher is expected." We do not see an acknowledgement on behalf of either the trustees or the Ministry relating to the additional work-load for the teachers, due to having to develop (whilst collaborating with individual parents) lesson plans for all eight elementary grades of instruction.

- This is the **ONLY** VSB public home learner programme in Vancouver.
- This programme **amalgamates** the elementary grades, and fits them into **two classrooms**.
- Every time it moves from one school to another, **intakes drop-off**.
 - The last move was justified: in order to support **expansion** of the programme.
- There is a **waiting list** for this programme (which was **capped**, for reasons unbeknownst to us).
 - When we mention to other parents what we are doing, **EVERYONE is unaware** that this programme even exists!
- We have to **compete against** other home learner programmes in surrounding districts:
 - So some home learners residing in Vancouver are **not even factored** in.
- Our programme already works under the **new curriculum**.

It appears as though your catchment area formula is inconsistent with the jurisdictional reach of home schooling within British Columbia.

Two teachers manage this, grades K to 7, class. Our understanding is that your formula will reduce the level of support to one teacher – for three dozen students! Our programme obligates expanded interaction with parents, in contrast to that of a traditional classroom; and we are ALREADY ALIGNED with (and teaching to) the new curriculum!

We are confronted with only a \$24m "invented" shortfall, which for the most part appears as though it is a result of higher operating costs culminating from increasing MSP fees, higher energy prices, and *Liberal* negotiated wage raises; as reported in the Vancouver Sun on February 20th 2016 (<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/shortfall+vancouver+school+board+fearing+cuts+classrooms/1734700/story.html>). We are unable to correlate the justification by government to under-fund education to the paltry tune of \$24m, when at the EXACT same time more than \$200m has been given to the wealthiest British Columbians in the form of a 2% tax break; as reported in The Tyee on February 17th 2015 (<http://thetyee.ca/News/2015/02/17/BC-Budget-2015/>). To juxtaposition students' access to education with a near 100% occupancy rate suggests a gross lack of clarity and even a basic comprehension on the core issues, as well as any real vision of how to adequately serve all British Columbians' educational needs; not to mention that this "manufactured" near 100% bar is based on questionable class size ratios, with over 1,300 classes province-wide serving more than 30 students per class (as referenced in the VSB's "Overview of Class Size and Composition in British

Columbia Public Schools 2015/16" report, on the British Columbia Ministry of Education's website at https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/class_size/2015/public.pdf).

We do not understand why you would so willingly and effortlessly dismantle a programme that is in essence a shining light of what education can look like **in 2016!** We hope to continue to be able to send our two children to this class, and in a few years' time we would like for our third daughter to have access to and experience this same high level of education as well.

Due to both of our own personal experiences with the rampant dysfunctionality within the public education system, we were extremely apprehensive about enrolling our children with the Vancouver School Board altogether. We have found that this programme in particular has defied so many of the systemic failures within our public education system. We are saddened that both the Ministry of Education as well as the Vancouver School Board present themselves as being so grossly unaware of this unique and progressive public school offering. The knee-jerk reaction to the "perceived" budgetary shortfall is absurd (both former and latter), especially in light of the tenfold – to this amount in money – being handed-out to the ultra rich in our province at the very same time.

The provincial government is obviously completely and entirely out-of-touch with the needs and aspirations of the average British Columbian, on multiple fronts. The majority of us realise that they are only in power by default, and that they were lucky – electorally speaking. It appears as though the School Trustees have a choice to make: to either stand along side teachers and British Columbians and protest against these unjustified cuts, or to instead stand shoulder to shoulder with the provincial government and follow through with these cuts: thus supporting the continual erosion of public education in British Columbia, which is essential for our prosperity.

Respectfully yours,

Shane & Jennifer Richardson
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**In the passionate defense of one support staff
John Oliver Mini School Office Support "B" Staff**

It is a terrible situation to have terrific educational programs pitted against one another for survival – any of these programs that get cut – which they will – is a detriment to our children and to the learning goals that the school board and province espouse.

Trustees are in the uncomfortable position of picking one good program to save over another. Playing Salomon is no easy calling. I reviewed your resumes. It is clear you would rather spend time on achieving ever greater learning outcomes for students than cutting programs that people care deeply about.

I am here as a passionate advocate for the John Oliver mini school program that I want to save and I believe should be saved. If you cut the part-time employee in the program it is my view that the program will close. My methodology to persuade you is to talk about the budget process, governance principals and to provide data points for your consideration.

Budget process – it looks to me that what I will call a **line item** approach is being taken by the committee. By that I mean, pick a line in the budget, in this case support staff B and eliminate it. See how that calculates to the bottom line and see if we hit our balanced budget needs. It has its benefits such as it prevents conflict since a consistent approach is adopted throughout the organization and the impact of change can be seen quickly.

However, this methodology does not in my understanding follow best practices in school board budgeting, at least as far as I have researched it. I have experience at a budget level and governance level. The methodology we use and I believe is considered best practices for school boards is an **evidence based** approach.

The difference is this: suppose we need to cross a river and we cannot swim. We are told that the river averages 3 feet in depth. Using a line item methodology, we proceed into the river to cross it making the assumption that we will always have our heads above water. Whereas, using an evidence base approach we collect a bit of data and learn that the river is only 1 foot deep for a large portion of it but in the middle it is 10 feet deep. Crossing will drown us. So we don't attempt to cross the river there. One works from logical assumptions and yet kills us and the other from evidence and delivers a better outcome.

What I have called evidence based budgeting is the best way to optimize the outcomes that you seek. It is the best way to fulfill your obligations to all your stakeholders and to best match your learning outcome desires for students with a limited budget. It is more effective in achieving optimal outcomes and more defensible than line item budgeting.

When you sit at the top, governance considerations must be overlaid on the budget process. Managers can recommend cuts to save money but they don't have the responsibility to guide the enterprise towards its stated goals and vision and values. That is your job. You must filter

that information and run it through the filter of your obligations to the vision and goals as stated to your stakeholders. You are the leadership. You must never forget those things when you do your job. You are the keepers of the vision. In my experience with tough budgeting it is all too often forgotten by the leaders as they get stuck in the details that their job includes the big picture, the stewards of the ship. Budgeting decisions must get made in light of the overall vision, mission and values that you espouse. Not in the absence of them or in ignorance of them. Every decision at your level should be defensible against those key guiding principles.

The VSB policy manual says inter alia: ...the public thereby...*endow those representatives with the authority to exercise their best judgment in setting policies, making decisions, and allocating funds to carry out that responsibility.*

And the Trustees declare inter alia:

To set policies and make decisions on the basis of clear educational philosophy and goals. All decisions made by the Board will be based on those clear purposes, the most crucial of which is the optimal learning of all children enrolled in our schools.

Let me refresh you regarding your values/vision

Mission: To enable students to reach their intellectual, social, aesthetic and physical potential in challenging and stimulating settings which reflect the worth of each individual and promote mutual respect, co-operation, and social responsibility

Of the 30 listed beliefs several stand out that this program achieves that might not happen in other school environments

We believe in co-operation, respect for others, and development of social responsibility.

We believe in the provision of a wide range of programs, services, and resources to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all learners

We believe in educating the whole person.

We believe in lifelong learning

We believe in fostering a sense of community

The goals seem to be teaching and learning to support student achievement and well-being.

In short, these goals for student achievement should drive the budget process and decisions should be driven by data.

The JO mini school program principles are:

Leadership

Outdoor education

Accelerated math and socials

Digital orientation – ability to leverage technology

The goal is independent, self-motivated learners, with a sense of community, in a digital world

Value of the program to kids – in their words

we are engaged, we feel motivated, we feel pushed to work hard and to be self motivated. We gain new experiences of the world that we would not otherwise get, we learn self-confidence, we learn responsibility and independence and a sense of community. We are role models on trips to lower grades.

Parent/teacher commitment – extremely high. Teachers spend countless hours of their time to sustain the program and its activities. Parents commit to purchase computers and pay for trips so that all kids participate and the school does not pay. We do so eagerly because we have engaged kids. There are 135 engaged students. If every program were this successful, you would be a model to the world.

At a time when student engagement is a concern this program is a gift. We have 135 highly motivated, fully engaged kids. They become self motivated, role models and community oriented. Many work towards the Duke of Edinburgh award and they complete year long personal leadership projects

Cutting the small staffing support the program gets will likely lead to its demise. This will be a tragedy given the highly successful outcomes that the program has been achieving. It will undermine optimal learning for a a very small savings in the budget.

Finally – looking forward:

The new curriculum has three pillars as far as I can glean from my reading. They seek to foster **life-long learning, intellectual, personal, social and emotional** proficiencies. The pillars are:

1. **Communication** – which included an emphasis on digital media – an emphasis of our program that no others have.
2. **Thinking** – subject specific – our program is designed around this competency and has individual learning programs to garner this exact competency
3. **Personal and Social** – our program is designed around this entire competency

The JO mini school was built years ago on these exact core pillars. It is a demonstrated success in numerous areas of your listed goals and beliefs. Why would you cut the program and risk losing it when it is a beacon for the new curriculum and something that others can learn from

Rather than seeing the support person to this program as merely a line item in the budget, I hope to show you that she is the essential cog in the wheel of an innovative, proven program ideally suited to the new curriculum to meet all the goals you have for high quality student outcomes. Lets no go backwards.

Please spare the part time position of Ms. Batkin and ensure that this very successful, comprehensive program, that has such strong student and parent support and that fits perfectly into the new curriculum remains intact.

When pitted against other programs for sacrifice at the budget alter, I would argue that this one punches above its weight in terms of the student learning impact it has versus the budget savings its elimination would yield.

Thank You

April 12, 2016

Good evening,

On behalf of the Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia, my name is Christin Reardon MacLellan, and I am Graham Blank, and we once again present on behalf of students, teachers, parents, community members, arts organizations and industry partners who are fiercely against the proposed cuts to music education in this year's budget proposal.

Despite the powerful advocacy that has taken place, here we are again-- the fifth time in the last seven years that music programs have been threatened. Regardless of advocacy efforts, stakeholder values, research, curriculum, and policy, we are presented with the same old story- the VSB can't fund music education in elementary schools.

As a direct result of the community's 2014 advocacy efforts, the CMEBC participated in a consultation process with Dr. Valerie Overgaard that explored sustainable solutions for the Band and Strings Program. The consultant's report documented the overall decline in music education in the VSB over the last ten years, and concluded a key point which is now being ignored by the district: "There is one point of consensus that arose in this process. Music education is not only important, it is essential....This includes band and strings, but extends more broadly to a general music education program taught by a music specialist." The report suggested that the consultation process "should be seen as a catalyst to enhance music education across the district."

Here are some disturbing statistics: Only 58% of elementary schools have a music specialist. Approximately 25% of elementary schools have neither a music specialist nor a band/strings teacher. In a recent survey, fewer than 50% of principals described their school's music program as high quality. In a recent interview, a VSB trustee described band and strings as an enhancement to the MANDATORY music curriculum in all schools: The truth is, there is absolutely NO mandated music program in the VSB. In fact, in many schools, band and strings is the ONLY music education offered. So, cutting band and strings would mean cutting music completely. This year, your communications have placed an emphasis on the word "optional" when addressing band and strings. For an "optional" program, the benefits and quality of instruction that students receive from specialist teachers while learning to play an instrument in an ensemble make this program absolutely essential.

Given the inequity of access to a music program taught by a specialist teacher in the VSB, what we'd like to know is HOW DO YOU KNOW that music is being taught in every school? You have no data documenting music learning or whether generalist teachers are qualified and comfortable teaching music. There is no consistency in music programming from one elementary school to the next.

Elementary music education in the Vancouver School Board is in crisis. The district needs to adopt a policy on music education for *all* schools and *all* students that includes general music taught by a specialist as well as the opportunity for all students to participate in band and strings. It's time to invest in the resources necessary for change, rather than running from this problem. The district needs an

advocate from within senior administration AND the school board, and the time is now. Actually, the time was seven years ago, but we're still waiting.

We encourage the VSB to require music taught by music specialists across the district. In 5 out of 9 Greater Vancouver school districts, there is a music specialist teacher PLUS a band or strings teacher *in every school*. These districts are not facing yearly cuts to their music programs. Like other districts, it is time for the VSB to **CHOOSE MUSIC EDUCATION** and to remain committed to the **PROMISE** of finding a sustainable solution for Band and Strings AND an equitable approach to music education more broadly. While we recognize that funding for education in BC is an ongoing challenge, I know that I speak for many in saying that we are sick and tired of music, as well as many other valuable programs, being placed in the middle of your battle with the current Ministry of Education and provincial government, for politics has no place in music education! Cutting band and strings is a destructive decision when the school district is in desperate need of a complete overhaul of elementary music education. You are denying students of essential learning opportunities and denying the community of what it has advocated so passionately for.



To: Trustees of the Vancouver School Board,

I am Kelly Tweeddale, President of the Vancouver Symphony and the VSO School of Music. I am here to advocate about the importance of having band and string programs in Vancouver elementary schools. Both Music Director Bramwell Tovey and I are here today because we have dedicated our professional lives, community lives, and family lives around the simple fact that music matters. And music matters not in isolation. Not in a practice room far from civilization, but in our lives, in our schools, and in our community.

Music is the one language that every human being learns to speak long before any other language. It is in essence our first language. All cultures today and back to the beginning of time make music. It is unique to the human condition and when we create music as an ensemble, together, it connects us to other people and other ideas. Music has been and always will be a social enterprise of civilization.

Here is the key: our capacity to learn music starts in our formative years. We may learn to make sounds, hum, and sing as a toddler, but as we enter elementary school we learn to make music with others at the very same time we are learning to share, read, communicate, and show compassion. Evidence is clear that learning to play an instrument and play in an ensemble increases all academic progress and critical thinking. It creates citizenship skills and discipline. And it gives us an opportunity to express our humanity and gives us the ladder to ascend to the top of Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs moving from basic needs to self-actualization.

In Vancouver, we are fortunate to have one of the greatest advocates for the role of classical music in our community with Maestro Bramwell Tovey who is here tonight to remind all of us that we have an obligation to give our children all the tools to succeed in a world that will require the collaboration and communication – in essence the language of music.

Good evening, members of the School Board, thank you for allowing me to speak to you tonight. My name is Sophia Pallister and I would like to speak to you addressing the proposed cuts to the Staffing of the Home Learners Program.

I am 11 years old. I am in Grade 6 of the Home Learners program and I have been in Home Learners since I was old enough to get an education. I started in kindergarten in Home Learners with Shannon Hobson, (the teacher who founded the HL program) as my teacher, the year after the program was founded. She has been my teacher now for 7 years. Ms. Juliana Lee has been my teacher for 6 years, so other than Ms. Hobson, I am the person who has been in the Vancouver Home Learners program the longest!

I like having close relations to my friends. In Home Learners we are more like a family than I think a regular class would be. My understanding is that the proposed budget cuts would allow for only one of our two teachers to continue. At this point I find that news very upsetting. It's really nice knowing your teachers and having the same teachers over, and over, and over.

Our two teachers are very different from each other and they collaborate together really well. Since we have a more flexible schedule we feel more flexible which means sometimes we get out of hand and I don't think that one teacher could manage all of us for an entire academic year!

At Home Learners you're not just learning what you're learning in school, you're also learning at home, so that means every single member of the class has an entirely personalized learning plan. In a regular classroom, the teacher prepares one single curriculum for the entire class, and that works because everyone's the same age and grade, however in our classroom alone, the teacher has to work on 8 different grade levels and curriculum. If you ask a teacher how difficult it is to think of one big curriculum for a whole class, multiply that by 38! Our teachers also have to manage all the different allotment money requests for each student in my class that meets on Tues & Thurs, plus the primary class that meets 2 other days a week, and I think that's too much work for only one person to handle.

I want to also tell you what a valuable program Home Learners is, and how special I think it is. I think it is one of the best programs the Vancouver School Board has, so I think you should be doing things to make it stronger, not make it weaker. Taking away one of our teachers would mean we might have to shorten our school days, which means less learning opportunities.

One of the best things about HL is that it is a mixed age class. Being in a mixed age class has been good because differences don't stand out as much, because everyone is different. That decreases the potential of bullying and members of the classroom start judging people less on their age and more by their abilities and potential, and more negative differences start to disappear. When I was in kindergarten I was very tall and I was advanced for my age, but because I was in a mixed age class, I could do more advanced learning. Right now, there's one person in my class who struggles in certain subjects, and sometimes he goes around the class and gets inspiration or asks for help from other people. In a normal classroom situation that would be called cheating. In Home Learners, and to quote Sir Ken Robinson, in the rest of the world, it's called collaboration.

In Home Learners, we also have the ability to choose what kinds of schooling and topics we do at home, within the given curriculum. It sort of teaches you the art of Creative Learning, and then you catch on and continue doing it all the time. You start to learn on your own. Creative Learning requires creative teaching and sometimes it's hard to think outside the lines that you were taught in, which is why it requires collaboration, which is why I strongly suggest you allocate the money to allow two teachers to continue to collaborate, as they have done so beautifully to foster this program to be the best it can be.

I strongly urge you to discontinue the cuts to this program.

Thank you for your time. Good night.

**Presentation to the Vancouver School Board on behalf of
PARENT ADVOCATES FOR GIFTED EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS - PAGES**
Marlene Rodgers, April 12, 2016

Good Evening Trustees,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Board concerning proposed cuts to gifted education. Many of you know me from my work advocating for education funding through Protect Public Education Now and FACE (Families Against Cuts to Education). Tonight, many Vancouver parents with diverse interests have gathered because the inadequacies of the education budget are affecting our children. For many years now, the province's budgeting has not kept pace with the rate of inflation or other rising costs. In constant dollars, the education budget has declined by 11% since 2002.¹ The Board has had to cut year after year, and there is little left to cut that will not affect students. School boards should not need to decide between music programs and athletic coordinators. Or between multicultural liaisons and literacy teachers. I want to see the children of Vancouver have access to all of these resources. But tonight I will specifically speak to the importance of the VSB gifted education programs, and make a plea for their continuation in spite of the untenable financial situation the board is in. Gifted programs made a huge difference in my daughter's education in elementary and now in high school, and they are vital to the 1100 students they serve.

Gifted students are among the spectrum of special needs students. They learn differently and they are able learners, so regular classrooms often leave them bored and unstimulated; without education that meets their needs, they are actually at risk for underachieving. And many gifted students are quite vulnerable. Their "gift" can come with issues such as anxiety, perfectionism, and sensitivity. Many gifted students are also considered "twice exceptional" in that they may simultaneously suffer from learning and behavioural challenges such as ADHD. For these students, failure to receive the education that accommodates their special need can result in dire health and behavioural outcomes. Some simply cannot function in a regular classroom setting and without public school programs to accommodate them, they only have recourse to homeschooling or, if their parents have means, private schools. It's imperative that public education in Vancouver and BC be able to provide the resources needed to meet the special needs of the gifted. Vancouver School Board policy (1994) requires appropriate responses to diversity and range of abilities and needs.

There are a spectrum of "gifted" kids and the various programs that serve them are all needed. Notably last week the Board took the Challenge programs off the list of proposed cuts when provincial holdback money was announced - and this was welcome news. However, there are still important resources that you are considering eliminating:

First, the Seminar Programs:

Seminar Programs reach gifted students who need more extensive enrichment than students who attend the Challenge Centres. They are longer programs that allow for more in-depth study, and they provide continuing support to the family and the school. The program

supports a number of students who have a designation of gifted/learning disabled or twice exceptional. For some students it is the only way they get through the school year.

My own daughter took part in a couple of Seminar Programs in elementary school. Although she is a gifted student who is able to adapt to a regular classroom, I was amazed at the difference I saw in her on days when she attended the Seminar Program. In a group with her intellectual peers she blossomed. She came home excited and inspired, and didn't feel she needed to hold back on answering questions for fear of judgement by classmates. She said to me, "mom they get my jokes!"

Also proposed for cuts is **The Mentorship Program**. It allows children who have an identified passion or special interest to take time from their regular studies to pursue that interest with an experienced mentor from outside the school. It is a unique program that has provided amazing enrichment opportunities to many students since it was established in the 90s. The teacher who runs this program has built up a community of volunteer mentors who are matched carefully with 60 - 80 children each year. This resource is invaluable, and to squander the investment the VSB has made in the program would be foolhardy. The list of volunteer mentors -- who provide learning opportunities at no cost to the board -- is very impressive. Mentors have included accomplished professionals, artists and academics in fields ranging from business to robotics, to medicine, to writing, computer game design and fine arts. A Holocaust museum director mentored a girl on the Holocaust; currently a boy is being mentored by researchers at the Brain Lab at UBC. One ESL boy built a wind tunnel under the tutelage of his engineer mentor. These mentorships go in-depth in a way that Challenge Centres and Seminar Programs cannot. Many of these students are G/LD, on the spectrum, ESL, or emotionally fragile.

Finally I want to talk about two key positions which are proposed for cuts, the **teacher-mentor** and the **part-time psychologist**. The teacher mentor position is only a 0.8 FTE (whereas two years ago it was 1.6 FTE), and the psychologist position is only 0.3 of a full-time equivalent. These programs and positions are at the centre of the gifted programs. They are crucial to the identification of gifted students and to meeting the needs of those students. The teacher-mentor coordinates the gifted programs and ensures that the academic needs of gifted students are being met, and that teachers have adequate resources to meet the needs of those students and implement their Individual Education Plans. The psychologist provides assessments that can help to pin point the complex learning needs of gifted learners. However, with only a 0.3 FTE equivalent for gifted testing, the wait time for testing can be years. To cut this position entirely would be shameful. When my own daughter started school and I realized she needed to access gifted programs I was told that for her elementary school of 500 kids, there was only one psycho-ed assessment budgeted per year for all special needs, and that the slot would almost always be given to students with learning disabilities. Because assessment waits can take years, many families who can afford to, opt for private assessments. Those who cannot afford this option are failed by the public system.

It's important to note, that when the needs of gifted students are unmet it puts a strain on the resources of the classroom teacher, and has an impact on other students in the class. Our classrooms are jam packed, often with kids with various types of needs, from learning disabled to english language learners. When gifted learners can be supported with programs outside the regular classroom it takes a burden off the classroom teachers and benefits all students in that room.

We live in a society that has historically believed in robust public services like healthcare and education. That means access for all. And one of the wonderful things about the district gifted ed programs is that they are available to all students. If the gifted programs wither, families who are able will leave the public system, or fundraise through their PACs to provide resources for their own schools. Children whose families and communities do not have the means will be left without access to gifted education.

Without increased provincial funding, I do not know how the Board will continue to for the needs of all the children who are represented here tonight. As you make your way through the budgeting process I encourage you to find a way to preserve the resources that exist for gifted education. Parents are willing to work with you to find creative solutions. Parents are willing to advocate to the government and to help facilitate cooperation between all parties. We can't leave our kids stranded.

Finally I want to point out that the provincial government is proud to be running budgets with surpluses - but these surpluses come at the cost of BC students. BC's budget may be in the black, but education is in the red. And this year Christy Clark established a rainy day fund. I think it's important that parents point out that, for BC schools, it's been pouring rain for years now. It's time for the government to recognize the crisis that has been created, and respond.

¹ PAN Questions on BC Budget 2016

http://www.panvancouver.ca/uploads/6/7/1/4/67145647/pan_questions_on_bc_budget_2016_moe_final.pdf

Presentation to Vancouver School Board / Committee of the Whole Meeting

April 12, 2016

By Eliana Gaertner

Hello, my name is Eliana Gaertner. I am in seventh grade at Kerrisdale Elementary in the MACC, a program for highly able learners. I want to urge you to reconsider budget cuts that affect gifted students. Gifted programs are incredibly important, and a wide variety are necessary to fit the various needs of gifted students. Cutting any of them would be a mistake.

When I was in grade one I participated in a two day challenge center program on poetry and art. It was the first time I realised that I could *do* something like that, that I didn't have to stick with the everyday school system, that I was capable of a lot more.

My younger brother is also a gifted student. He would frequently argue with my mother about going to school, as he found it boring and a waste of time. Last year he went to a challenge center program about architecture, and found, to his surprise, that it was something he really enjoyed. He learned cool things, he met other students with similar interests, and as he puts it, he didn't even fully realise he was even learning. This year he got admitted to the MACC program as well, and is really benefiting from it.

We also have a family friend who is gifted/learning disabled. His experiences in the challenge centre, mentorship, and other gifted programs have made all the difference in his life.

The experiences my brother, our friend and I have had are just a few stories out of the over twelve hundred students who go through gifted programs each year. Each gifted student is different, has different needs, and will benefit in different ways from the programs. There needs to be a place for *all* gifted students, so that all of us can learn to the best of our abilities and develop to our full potential.

Thank you.

Lila Simchen

VSB Presentation

Hello, I am Lila Simchen, a sixth grade student at Osler Elementary. I am currently in the MACC program, and have been since fourth grade. Tonight, I want to highlight why programs such as Mentorship, Seminar Programs, teacher positions and psychologist positions are so beneficial, and unique, and how they have, and will continue to, improve the lives of students across the VSB.

Being in enrichment programs, such as MACC, means that you have special needs. Being a high ability learner means that you require the same amount of attention to reach your full potential, as students with other special needs. And these programs act as our support programs.

First and foremost, these programs give students the opportunity to explore the subjects they are passionate about with people who share that passion. In such a learning environment, students learn a lot from their peers, as well as their teachers.

From first to third grade, I attended annual challenge programs, which later became MACC selection sessions. These challenge programs were a breath of fresh air and exposed me to unfamiliar, exciting new material, alongside exciting new people, some of whom later became my classmates. I remember these programs very fondly, and because of them I am surrounded by exciting new material everyday. I feel, as do many others, that these challenge programs were the most academically stimulating parts of my primary school experience, and I want programs such as this one to continue for other students far into the future.

Initiatives such as Mentorship, and Seminar Programs give students the chance to leave the classroom and find stimuli in another environment. Having a change of scenery makes learning much more productive, and refreshing for people in general. Every term, we go to the Vancouver Public Library three or four times. These visits give us a chance to work exclusively on our term projects without the distractions of being inside the school building. Other trips may demonstrate the atmosphere of the work place, or the importance of other public locales.

CHALLENGE CENTER

Hello, my name is Fraser Hannay.

I am in Grade 6 in the French Immersion MACC program at Kerrisdale Elementary School.

I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to me.

I believe that challenge programs are very important for schools to have.

When I was in grade 3, I was invited to participate in a challenge center at my school.

Every week, Challenge Center would be the thing I would most look forward to. I always did well in school but wasn't always excited about school. Although I only went to Challenge for 2 periods a week, the program provided an opportunity to work on projects that interested me. I started to really enjoy school.

I participated in Challenge Center in grade 3 & 4. At the end of grade 4, I was invited to try out for the MACC class (Multi Age Cluster Class). The MACC program is like a full time Challenge Center. I enjoy the philosophical discussions, critical thinking, and both the individual & group projects such as Science Fair, Heritage Fair and Evening of Eminence.

I really hope that programs such as Challenge Centers are not cut because they've fueled my enjoyment and interest in learning. Working with kids who enjoy the same learning opportunities has resulted in great friendships.

I'd like to thank the school board for providing the funding for these types of programs.

I have definitely benefited from them and I hope other kids will get to as well.

Good evening everyone,

Dear trustees and respected community members,

My name is Kawal. I am here to say that services of South Asian Multicultural Worker are very important to our community. I have two children. They are in grade 1 and grade 4. I had my education in India and here the school system is totally different. In India, we had text books for each subject and we followed the book. So our parents knew exactly what we were studying and it was easy for parents to help their children with school work.

Here, when my older son started school, I wanted to find out all about school. So the class teacher suggested that I should meet with the South Asian multicultural worker. Very soon I started having regular meetings at school with Multicultural Worker. She told me how to help my child at home. Since there was no homework, I learned what activities I can do with my son. I understood the importance of reading at home. Whenever I had any issue, I would either talk to multicultural worker on phone or meet at school. It was a very good start.

I can speak English well but it is so much natural and easier when I can express in my mother tongue. I have a clearer understanding then. The language the teachers use is sometimes difficult to understand. They use terms which we are not familiar with.

My older son was very quiet. I noticed during lunch break other students would push him and he never said anything. It happened more and more as other children took advantage of this. I was very worried so Multicultural worker organized a meeting with the counsellor and the class teacher. He is very fond of art, so it was decided that he can get Art Therapy. He really enjoyed those sessions and learnt to express himself more than he used to. I am still working together with multicultural worker where he is developing leadership skills.

I started feeling very comfortable talking to school staff and was able to communicate with teachers more effectively. I started volunteering in my son's class.

I have built a lot of trust in this relationship. I share my issues very openly which helps in coming up with right solutions.

Now when I am talking about these things, it sounds like these are very minor issues. Actually they are not. My children are still very young and I deal with challenges all the time. But I know that I have help.

At my children school, Multicultural Worker has been celebrating Diwali for many years. It brings the whole school community together. Our gym is packed that day with parents, grandparents, uncles, aunt, and friends. Students' performances include music, folk and classical dance, and drumming. Many students from other cultural backgrounds also participate. Students take a lot of pride in it. Singing and dancing plays an important role in South Asian families. It is because of the efforts of Multicultural worker we can showcase our culture. I with many parent volunteers work with Multicultural worker to make this event unique.

My request to you is not to bring any change to this service for our community.

Thank you.

Good evening everyone,
Dear Trustees and respected community members,

My name is Niki and I represent the South Asian parents in the Vancouver School Board. The news of losing our South Asian Multicultural Worker is a big shock to my family and our community.

I came to Vancouver from India with my husband, my mother-in-law and 2 sons ages, 10 and 8 about 11 years ago. It was an exciting but also a very scary experience to be in a new country where culture and language are very different. I could read some English but never spoke the language. We had no knowledge of the Canadian school system.

My older son was in grade 4 when he came. Very soon he started to complain that some students in his class did not treat him nicely. He was also having difficulty understanding the teacher. I felt very helpless because I did not know what to do. The problems continued on and I did not know how to talk to the teacher about it because of lack of English language. My son had no idea of how to handle it too. Luckily at that time, the class teacher noticed that my son was having problems in the school and asked the Multicultural worker to contact us.

It was the best connection I've ever made for my children. I contacted the worker right away who started regular meetings with our family and the school teacher. I did not know anything about the schools because I came from a very different background. I wanted to learn. The Multicultural Worker understood the challenges me and my family were going through. She became the only person I began to trust and I could share sensitive family issues that were affecting my children's education.

She also helped other parents in the school. I remember attending all the parenting sessions that were run by her. She was very patient with me, explained things to me so it was easy for me to understand. Everytime there was an issue in school, she was always there to empower me and the other parents, especially in explaining why we do things based on our own culture. She supported me all the way even till high school.

My third child was born here. I was very happy to think that I won't have problems with the English language anymore. But when he started Kindergarten and very soon, the class teacher felt that he has some learning difficulty. I did not know the concept of learning difficulties. So I was not willing to accept that he is not learning at the same rate as the other students in his class. The Multicultural Worker met with me many times that year. She explained things in a way that I began to accept that my child in Kindergarten some learning issue. That was when I started the process of getting help for him. I was not familiar with this concept at that time but now I have become a

strong advocate for my son because of the help that the Multicultural worker has given me.

Now my oldest son is going to Engineering College, I'm very proud of him and my middle son is going to start in BCIT soon. I am also very proud of myself because I have achieved so much. Thanks to the one person who helped and supported me and my family through those trying times in school.

To you, respected Board of trustees, I would like to appeal on behalf of the South Asian community, to please retain the position of our South Asian Multicultural worker. You already hear from the news about high school students part of gangs and violence in some parts of our community, not to mention cultural clashes, drop-outs, family issues and many other issues. Our dream is to provide our kids good Canadian education and a great life in Canada. To remove a South Asian Multicultural Worker will be a great disservice to the very hardworking, tax-paying South Asian families in the schools.

I thank you all for listening.

**Vancouver School Board Public Consultation
April 12, 2016**

Presenter: Deborah Stern Silver, Parent, L'École Bilingue Elementary School

I am a parent of two children, in grades 5 and 2, at L'École Bilingue Elementary. You have heard from advocates of many programs and services under threat, and all of these are valid views. I'm here to raise concerns about how the proposed budget cuts will affect Gifted Education.

I know several Trustees from work on the Seismic Upgrade program at L'École Bilingue. You have been excellent advocates for us, but our new school will be bittersweet: Our children will be in a safe, new school building. But the programming inside will be diminished under the proposed cuts to gifted education.

People often don't recognize that giftedness can be a challenge. *It is a special need*, often accompanied by emotional and behavioural issues, particularly anxiety. These students learn in different ways, and look at the world through a different lens. The VSB programs at risk of being cut address those special needs in a way that puts gifted students with like-minded peers.

My experience: My older daughter started reading at age 3. Her teachers had suggested she be assessed for giftedness, but we were told she couldn't have a district assessment because there wasn't capacity. We sought an outside assessment, and that led to a gifted designation and IEP.

She has participated in in-school enrichment classes, with the chance to work with similar students on creative problem-solving and to explore ideas in a more in-depth way.

This year, she took a public speaking program where she learned how to craft an effective speech and the art of persuasion. I have seen her enthusiasm grow with these programs; she now is better at addressing a challenge (in school or out) from various angles and to collaborate more effectively.

She took the skills from this seminar and used them to enter a community public-speaking contest afterward. She was the only student out of more than 100 from public school – and she won first place. She told me she would not have had the confidence and determination to enter the contest without that seminar. I will never forget the joy and pride on her face when she concluded her speech that day. I also won't forget her heartache another time at going a full day without being called on by her (excellent) teacher, because the teacher had to attend to others who didn't know the answers. What she likes most about the enrichment and seminar programs is "I'm not the only one always shooting my hand up in the air," and she can share her opinions and ideas without fear of being judged.

This is the long-range effect of gifted programming. It's more important than my child—or any one child. The programs, and the teacher-mentor and psychologist who teach teachers (most who have no gifted training) how to help gifted students succeed in the classroom, are essential.

As intended/designed, the VSB program is equitable. Every student, regardless of home situation, has a chance to participate. If these programs are cut, parents with the means will leave for private schools, or schools in wealthier areas with parents who have time for advocacy and to provide resources will set up school-based programs: This sets up a system of haves and have-nots.

Between 2-5% of population is in gifted range, and because of funding cuts, the VSB doesn't have that many students identified. Many students are falling between the cracks.

We appreciate Challenge Centres being reinstated, but it isn't enough: We need diverse range of services to address diverse needs of gifted students. This allows gifted students to feel validated, academically challenged, with other children who approach learning in different ways.

BC has developed a new curriculum to keep pace with best practices in education and allow students to compete in modern society:

- To personalize the learning experience, to better match each student's strengths and needs, to balance basic skills with concepts to succeed in education and in life, and to support critical thinking, communication skills, and personal/social competence. Gifted education meets all of these criteria, and it is a low-cost investment for such returns.

I understand that both you as Trustees, and we as parents, have each been forced into a horrendous position: budget cuts have pitted parents and programs against each other, though all the services you're hearing about tonight meet important needs. And the VSB is in the unenviable position of making these choices because of a repeated failure to adequately fund education.

A bipartisan government committee has concluded for two years now that education in BC is shortchanged, and has recommended that provincial funding be increased. That hasn't happened, which essentially makes the public input process pointless.

Well-meaning people can disagree. The province and the VSB can continue to argue how to address this budget shortfall, but in the end, the fact remains that our students and teachers are suffering. Surely, every reasonable person can agree that children have a right to an education that meets their learning needs and prepares them for success.

BC is one of the wealthiest provinces, yet it has the second-lowest spending per student in Canada. This should be a source of shame. Yes, these are hard choices, but it's a matter of priorities. I join with others in calling on the Province to adequately fund education, and for the VSB to commit to offering a full range of gifted education. I can think of no greater investment idea than tomorrow's leaders.

Good evening, my name is Gurmit Sangha. I am the Parent Advisory Council Chair at Sexsmith Elementary School. Sexsmith is geographically located in an area of Vancouver where there is a large concentration of South Asian families. I am here to advocate for the South Asian Multicultural Liaison Worker position which is being eliminated. Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

Multicultural liaison workers are a cultural and linguistic bridge between home and school. New or recent immigrants often have difficulties finding their place in a new society. They struggle for many years both culturally and financially. Often both parents need to work and generally are only able to get lower paying jobs and tend to work long hours. They struggle to stay involved in their children's lives both in and after school. These parents do not understand how the school system works as it is very different from what they are used to. They generally feel that they do not have the education or skillset to help their children with the educational and cultural issues that the children face, both in and outside of school.

Multicultural liaison workers are essential advocates for these families. They help parents understand the school system and the importance of active involvement in their children's education and the schools their children attend. They provide knowledge of the resources available in the community and help families connect with them. These workers provide cultural counselling, helping both the school and the parents understand what the issues are and why they occur. They help deal with issues of racism and discrimination.

The needs of families have become more complex as they are facing new challenges everyday with the social and technological changes occurring in our society. The presence of the multicultural liaison workers in the schools allows them to help intervene as early as possible. There are emergency situations from time to time when a multicultural worker needs to be involved immediately. They help the families understand the urgency of particular situations and provide support during traumatic events. They are a channel of clear communication between home and school. The fears, questions and concerns of the families are clearly communicated to school staff.

Often adding additional complexity to the role of the multicultural worker is the cultural handicap that some immigrant families have in understanding that their children may have special needs. Helping parents understand psycho-educational assessments and making informed choices is part of their job. It can be extremely upsetting and frustrating for parents to find out that their child has learning difficulties/special needs. Immigrant families do not understand the system and cannot advocate for

their children to secure support from special needs staff. Multicultural workers work with the parents so that they understand the unique needs of their children and they advocate for the families so that their children get the right support in a timely fashion.

Multicultural liaison workers also promote cultural education for all students through showcasing students' talent in special assemblies for the whole school. This helps many students develop self-esteem and confidence. We have a wonderful Diwali celebration in our school with ethnic food and dance which is not possible without the effort of our multicultural liaison worker

Multicultural liaison workers also run workshops for school staff. Many school staff do not understand the family dynamics of South Asian families and multicultural liaison workers play a key role in bridging this gap. Extended families are often the norm in the South Asian community and there are many challenges associated with this. The multicultural liaison workers deal with all members of the family, for example grandparents and uncle and aunts, for the benefit of the children.

Multicultural liaison workers provide education on the issue of gangs and drugs and the violence and consequences that come from associating with them. As you have likely heard the City of Surrey is in the midst of dealing with these issues. They have added 93 additional police officers for enforcement purposes. With the violence not decreasing the City is talking about community involvement and earlier intervention with youth. This is what multicultural liaison workers do.

It is nice to see the politicians engage in community events to provide support for the communities. There tends to be the promise of more resources at these events. If the proposed cut goes through, then only two multicultural liaison workers will be supporting the entire district's South Asian community. Unfortunately they will be stretched thin and may not be able to provide adequate services to the entire community. It is also very important for the South Asian community that both female and male workers are there to provide these vital services to families. With the proposed cut, the services of the one female worker will be cut. This would be unfortunate as it will create an additional gap in the provision of these services.

In closing I would like to reiterate the value and importance of the role that multicultural liaison workers provide in both our school systems and in our communities. I implore you to reconsider and retain the position of the multicultural liaison worker. Thank you.



POINT GREY SECONDARY SCHOOL

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

5350 East Boulevard
 Vancouver, B.C. V6M 3V2
 Telephone: (604) 713-8220 Fax: (604) 713-8218

April 12, 2016

To the Vancouver School Board trustees:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak tonight.

Nikki and I are co-chairs of the Point Grey Music Supporters Society and we are here representing the students and parents of the Point Grey Music program. We would like to discuss the proposed cuts to the Band and Strings Elementary Program in the Vancouver School District.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the Board for the adjustments to the budget that have allowed for retaining the Fine Arts and Music Coordinator. We believe that this shows our community that the Board values music and believes that it should be part of the curriculum. At Point Grey our music teacher's philosophy is that "EVERONE SHOULD MAKE MUSIC EVERY DAY."

I am sure that you will hear many times tonight and through the course of the public forums, how research shows that music improves cognitive skills and can help children deal with difficult life situations. Our children have been extremely fortunate to have taken music classes beginning in elementary school. It would be very sad to know that elementary students in Vancouver will not have the opportunity that our children had in elementary school.

The Point Grey Music program is one of the largest programs in Vancouver. We are fortunate to have 41 percent of the PG student population enrolled in music classes at Point Grey. A large majority of these students are involved in multiple groups such as Concert Band, Jazz band, Strings and Choir. The teachers are amazing and have created the largest Jazz program in Vancouver. We are fortunate that our children can be part of an exceptional program. We know that there are many other amazing programs in the district, that all benefit from the elementary school program.

The reason I draw attention to what our program is all about, is to bring understanding of the value of the elementary school band and strings program. Our children and many others were fortunate enough to participate in elementary music starting in grade 5. They all benefited from this rich opportunity.



POINT GREY SECONDARY SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

5350 East Boulevard
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If the elementary program is cut it will adversely affect the secondary school music programs, as the students entering grade 8 will not have any experience. This year our school had 59 students enrol in our grade 8 concert band. Of this 41% were beginners and a resounding 59% had experience from the elementary school program. Currently we see the positive effects of starting music in elementary school, which allows great depth within the program.

As an example the Point Grey Jazz A band was chosen as the first group to be featured from Canada on the regular feature the "School of Jazz" on KPLU radio in Seattle which was broadcast worldwide. The group was also chosen for a music education video produced by the Coastal Jazz and Blues Society. The video featured interviews with students talking about the value of music education. Many of them mentioned that they started music in elementary school and how positive music has been in their lives. They were able to achieve a high quality of playing that we believe would not have been achieved if the majority of students had not been exposed to the valuable elementary program.

We worry that many students once they reach the high school level may not pick up an instrument, which will cause the number of students in music programs to drop. We believe that learning any new activity is easier and best if done at an early age.

Lastly, by taking away the elementary band and strings program in Vancouver, you will be denying students from all socio economic backgrounds the wonderful opportunity to create music.

Sincerely on behalf of the Students,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kirsty'.

Kirsty Carpenter Co-Chair PGMSS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nikki'.

Nikki Penner-Horodyski Co-Chair PGMSS

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April 12, 2016

Let me begin today by saying that I do not envy you; you have been placed in an untenable position as a result of chronic underfunding by the Ministry of Education. I will support you in resisting this underfunding in any way that I can.

I am an Associate Professor of Sociology at Simon Fraser University. In this capacity, I am the leader of a research team that has received \$151,000 in federal funding to develop a videogame to depict the experiences of transgender and gender nonconforming kids in the Greater Vancouver Area. I have conducted extensive interviews with many kids like these. I am also in the final stages of writing a book on Transgender Children that will be published by NYU Press. The insights I have to share today relate to this expertise.

The new budget proposes to eliminate two positions that are crucial in supporting vulnerable children and young people in Vancouver: the Anti-Homophobia and Anti-racism Teacher Mentors. I wish to tell you why these positions are deeply interrelated and crucial for the Vancouver School Board to maintain.

In my research I have found that the most precarious LGBT kids experience homophobia or transphobia in concert with racism and poverty, in often lethal combinations. Institutional processes that generate racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia are not isolated from one another but are combined and it takes hard work and dedication to recognize their effects and to generate positive change.

We need anti-homophobia and anti-racism mentors who are embedded in their communities to:

1. lead us in these change processes;
2. provide a supportive point of contact to vulnerable kids and their families; and
3. assist school personnel as they work to create greater safety in school settings.

In the past two decades, many schools in North America have passed “zero-tolerance” anti-bullying policies/anti-homophobia policies, often in an effort to protect themselves from legal action. Rather than heralding these policies as “progress,” considerable research has demonstrated that such policies fail to protect vulnerable LGBT kids and instead contribute to a “school-to-prison pipeline” for racialized and disabled children and youth. This is true for Canada as well as for the United States.

Research indicates that aboriginal, African Canadian, immigrant youth of colour and disabled kids are disproportionately targeted for discipline practices that push kids out of school. Such exclusion is a strong predictor of dropping out and subsequent poverty and incarceration.

But the Vancouver School Board has to date charted a more appropriate course of action by doing more than passing policies:

- You have emphasized change and support at the level of school culture;
- You have had an anti-racism teacher mentor since the 1980s;
- You quickly complemented your anti-homophobia policy with the establishment of an anti-homophobia and diversity mentor in 2005;
- You recently updated the gender and sexual diversity policy – leaning heavily on the work of the anti-homophobia mentor to do so.

The Vancouver school Board should be proud of its efforts to support staff and school communities to change school cultures away from patterns of institutional racism, homophobia and transphobia and to provide greater safety to LGBT and gender nonconforming kids.

But when anti-homophobia and anti-racist policies lack dedicated staff, three things are likely to happen:

- First, mostly privileged LGBT kids will leverage them because they and their parents have the resources and cultural knowledge to work with formal systems and to ‘lawyer up’ if necessary;
- Second, rather than driving change efforts, such policies may be invoked solely as a disciplining mechanism that will disproportionately target racialized and disabled kids; and
- Third, precarious (and often invisible) LGBT kids may lose out because necessary changes to school culture are not being systematically implemented.

Research indicates that the more we pressure an increasingly smaller number of school staff to meet the needs of the same number of students, the greater the likelihood of authoritarian systems of discipline and oppressive relationships among kids that reinforce existing social hierarchies.

Given the extensive research that details:

1. the vulnerabilities of LGBT and gender nonconforming kids,
2. the particular vulnerability of those who are racialized and impoverished, and
3. the extent to which school discipline disproportionately targets marginalized kids,

I submit that it is fundamentally **unethical** to eliminate the anti-homophobia and anti-racist mentor positions, diversity staffing levels that are already inadequate. The VSB should back up its commitments to antiracism, anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia by maintaining these positions at all costs.

Yours truly,

Ann Travers, Ph.D.

Associate Professor and Principal Investigator, “Gender Vectors of the GVA”

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Hi, my name is Tom Davis and I'm the Vice President of Band on Van techs music council.

like my friend Michelle here, i was part of my elementary schools Jr. and Sr. Concert band ensembles . With this experience, I was able to almost seamlessly transition into intermediate band skipping over a year in beginning band. This transition is crucial to our program! When student are able to bring their prior music experiences into there high school band and string classes it raises the overall level of musicianship in the program. One aspect I've witnessed first hand is the student to student bond. I know that I would take advice from my friend before I'd take advice from a teacher. But this structure of student support can and will only work if the kids entering our program enter with previous music experience. With these cuts, many kids will be stripped of the chance to enter into the music community at an early age, if not totally. These cuts have long term implications on the quality of musicians that will walk out of high school and into the professional music industry.

26.

Statement to the Vancouver Board of Education

April 12, 2016

Honoured Chair and Trustees of the Board of Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to defend the Band and Strings Programs in the Vancouver Schools, and also to make a larger case in defense of education in this school district.

You have already heard eloquent testimony from a wide range of stakeholders and supporters: people of extraordinary commitment who have invested their lives in making music education broadly available as a source of joy and affirmation for young people from all strata of society. Music programs provide so many benefits, including enhanced teamwork, leadership skills, fine motor skills, better concentration, memory, listening, motivation, inspiration, and lifelong commitment. Is there any other subject that brings together such an assortment of fundamentally important experiences and transferable life skills in such a wonderfully cohesive bundle? Is there any other subject that empowers its students to express so clearly and comprehensively such a wide range of benefits?

Music programs are a priceless nexus of multi-modal learning and teamwork. They help the entire educational experience to function and cohere, and they offer benefits that should be available to all students.

Music is a refined art of combination and coordination, and this is why it is so relevant to your problem, and essential to the present and future health of our educational system. If you remove thriving music programs, you will hurt the coherence and efficacy of the entire system in countless other ways. The collateral damage must be factored into the equation.

Teaching music is difficult. It requires extensive knowledge, training, diverse skills, and immense passion and energy. Music programs will only be successful and vibrant when taught by teachers with specific knowledge, experience, and training in music education. You cannot download the music curriculum to general teachers and hope for meaningful results. Designated and qualified music teachers ensure a dynamic and successful music program and facilitate the success of all other teachers in their areas of strength.

Music is a universal phenomenon, and a force that connects us. It facilitates individual and collective expression and it is the essence of collaboration. *It tunes us*, in every sense: it brings us into harmony and helps us work together, and it fills us with the energy and positive impulses of rhythm and melody that keep us moving forward.

We cannot afford to lose the educational and societal benefits of music programs taught by expert music teachers. Don't squander the huge investment that has already been made, and that can never be recreated from scratch. You won't be saving money, you will be wasting it, and you will be losing priceless programs that have energized students in all walks of our society.

Now to the larger question, because we are here tonight to defend public education as a whole, including all the programs at risk tonight.

The undeniable fact is that all the proposed cuts represent unacceptable reductions to the quality of education and to equitable availability of learning opportunities for students across the district. We have all been here before, five times in the last seven years, to defend programs that inspire students to work hard; that infuse their schools with productive energy and a sense of community; and that provide unparalleled joy in learning. Every program represented here tonight makes a fundamental and transformative difference for the students it serves. The teachers and staff that create and support these programs are among the most energetic, devoted, and hardest working teachers in the system, and in many cases they move between multiple schools every weekday, managing a different dynamic in each school, in a very taxing and unstable working environment. You are expecting them to do miracles, and they perform those miracles every day. But you reward them with the prospect of cutting their positions.

Parents, students, teachers, and staff in Vancouver are demoralized by years of cuts. The declining numbers in Vancouver schools arise from many factors, but the declining quality of education is undeniably one of those factors, and one that many families consider. The surrounding districts receive the same funding per student, but are able to offer and maintain higher quality programs. Music is mandatory in many of the neighbouring school districts, and the programs are thriving because they are properly integrated into each school's programming, so that music teachers provide prep time for other teachers. Meanwhile, Vancouver provides only "optional" programs that it has been starving for years, instead of providing music experiences to benefit *every* student. If you make the proposed cuts, you will see further declines in school populations. Families care deeply about the quality of public education and will move to districts that offer better programs and lower living costs. It is essential that you make decisions in the next weeks that will *stop* the downward spiral in the Vancouver School District, rather than accelerate the decline.

As trustees, you have been elected to maintain the quality of educational programs and learning opportunities in our district. In the face of enrolment changes and the prospect of enrolments declining further, you must adjust the capacity of the system, rather than whittle the curriculum down to skin and bones. Schools need to operate near full capacity to ensure that students and teachers enjoy all the opportunities that they can create together. When you allow schools to operate well below capacity, you are thinning out the opportunities, and spending more for less. The legacy of the district lies not in the buildings that have outlived their utility and safety, but in the efforts of the teachers, the learning of the students, and the countless resulting contributions to society. My parents graduated from King George Secondary School. Not the current school, built in 1963, but the original school, built in 1914. The legacy of that school lies in the quality of the education it housed, the experiences of the students, and the countless contributions they made to society, not in a building that no longer exists.

It is time for the Board of Education to work with the City of Vancouver and with the Province of British Columbia, to make the real estate holdings of the School Board work better for students, families, teachers, staff, and society at large. We need a new vision and new approach to concentrate school activities in the locations that can best support a vibrant and rich array of programs, for every student and every family. Some schools will need to close, and those closures must be distributed fairly across the entire district. But this can be done in a way that guarantees that every student and every family will benefit, in safer schools that can provide *all* the programs that will enrich the experiences and opportunities of students throughout their lives.

Your challenge as trustees is to make the system work again. This will require fundamental strategic reorganization, but you can lead us on the path to make our schools vibrant again. You can restore the positive energy in our schools, and you can equal and surpass the quality of education available elsewhere in the region. The Vancouver schools should be — and can be — the shining example of public education in British Columbia. You accepted this challenge when you ran for election, and now is your opportunity to show us that democracy works, and that our elected officials can make our city a better place for everyone, young and old.

I call on you to enter into immediate negotiations with the City and the Province, and to begin the fundamental reorganization of the board's real estate assets. Those changes are inevitable, and we are already too familiar with the damage caused by delaying them. Unlock and maximize the huge value that lies dormant in underutilized sites, and invest those new resources in the curriculum and teachers, so that *all* of the proposed cuts can be avoided.

Sincerely,
Richard Kurth
Professor of Music
Director, UBC School of Music

Comments to the Vancouver Board of Education's
Board/Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting

12 April, 2016 | Vancouver Technical Secondary School | 7:00 p.m.

Bianca Chui; Xiaoyu Huang

on behalf of Sir Winston Churchill Secondary Music Council

Chui: Good evening. My name is Bianca Chui and I am the Public Relations Officer of Sir Winston Churchill Secondary Music Council.

Huang: Good evening. My name is Xiaoyu Huang and I am the Chair of the Churchill Council. It is our honour to be able to present today on behalf of our Council, consisting of fifteen student volunteers and involving over two hundred students.

Chui: Sir Winston Churchill Secondary is largest public school in the district with over 100 staff members and over 2,200 students, 1/5th of whom participate in our Fine Arts Department. Our music courses span over 15 on-and-off-timetable groups from strings, choir, band and student-run ensembles. Our students are extremely dedicated and passionate about music as seen through students that travel across the city to attend offtime table table rehearsals at 7:00 a.m. in the morning as well as staying after school till 4:30 p.m., working as on-site volunteers and coordinators for concerts and other functions until 11:00 p.m., and making extraordinary sacrifices, both academic and personal, to enrich the Fine Arts experience at Churchill School.

Huang: We are especially moved by the rousing performances our feeder school bands have put on since an event which incorporates them began at Churchill in 2015. We have been hard-pressed to name a program, out of those from Sir Wilfred Laurier, David Lloyd George, Dr. Annie B. Jamieson Elementary, and other schools who had participated in our Feeder School Concerts, that is not filled with attentive, engaged students, budding virtuosi, and band and choir members overjoyed at the opportunity to share their craft with a large audience. Therefore, actions such as those took place when the Vancouver School Board (VSB) faced a deficit in 2015 of \$12.34-million and considered the removal of the elementary school band and strings programs, a proposition which is to save just \$630,651, concern us as community members, associates of elementary school-aged musicians, and a student organization vying for community and excellence in our organizational pursuits.

Huang: Through our work, we have realized that elementary school participation in music programs is the most common precursor to enrolling in music courses. The strenuousness of curriculum work often prevents potential students from choosing to participate in the program, inhibited by the process of learning a new instrument while meeting the rigours of academic study. The \$25 annual fee of participation is in stark contrast to the tuition of private music

instruction at Vancouver's myriad music institutions, many of which, despite their outstanding outreach programs, cannot adequately provide accessible learning experiences. Programs such as the Mom to Mom Poverty Initiative, which originated from Churchill, offer musicians for whom volunteering to teach music is not only possible but a desirable initiative; however, costs for purchasing, maintaining and loaning instruments hamper non-profit organizations from proceeding effectively without governmental grants and other monetary contributions.

Chui: In our city, band is taught to Grade 5 to 7 students at 31 schools; another 20 schools receive strings education for Grades 4 through 7. Another proposition can be to explore **expanding** choir programs, which are currently offered both formally and informally, to schools. Cutting the program will save, according to a Georgia Strait report, in the neighbourhood of \$400,000 per year, but the cost for the students to receive equivalent arts education outside of school far surpasses this cost to our society.

Huang: To conclude, we draw on the words of Christin MacLellan, president of the Coalition for Music Education (BC Chapter), with whom our Council is lucky to have contact. "Playing music together in a music ensemble gives students so many benefits intellectually, socially, emotionally, academically that they can't get through any other means of instruction. ... And taking that away is tragic." As students, we recognize the mandated stipulations for the Board and the incredibly difficult decisions awaiting other issues on this account. We humbly ask, as benefactors of the elementary strings programs and as student leaders, for the Board and other stakeholders to explore options to bring back some form of music education to our schools so that they may share in its lifelong gifts as we did.

Chui: We are also lucky to have established contact with the Vancouver Technical Music Council in the past weeks. Their leadership tonight is an example of the multitude and multifaceted ways in which we continue to make music in Vancouver possible. For students. By students. In the public system. And for everyone in this city.

Huang: As a Council, we will continue to face indelible challenges around not only the perception of music courses in public sphere, to uphold the common language that we share, and to uphold the only way through which we can ever acquire that common language: music education. [Both] Thank you.

My opinion on the proposed cutback of the Vietnamese Multicultural Liaison Worker Cut-Back

My name is Charles Truong I'm student at David Thompson in grade 12. I am extremely concern about the proposed cut back of the Vietnamese Multicultural Liaison worker. I would like to address some point on this matter.

1. Impact of MLW in school:

- Vietnamese Club - connecting new ELL Vietnamese students with regular Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese students
- Joining school activities i.e. David Thompson Lunar New Year celebrating
- Joining school events i.e. Hunger-bites Fundraising

2. Impact of MLW with parents/students:

- Liaison - Between school and parents, and between parents and school
- Cross cultural understanding
- Translating, interpretation and being an advocate for the students i.e. support students to becoming more confident in the community, also helping them make the best decision

3. Impact of MLW in the community:

- Providing students in Vietnamese Club with many opportunities i.e. volunteering, cultural celebration, and creating the awareness of community resources
- Creating events connect many people from different cultural background

4. Impact on Jarai Community:

- Ju Siu a student at Tupper, on the how MLW have served the Jarai Community

I don't know how much you will be saving by cutting back this part-time position but it is a step back. We should not be moving backwards. Rather we must be move forward every year.

PAN presentation budget consultation April 12, Heather Legal (3 min)

I'm Heather Legal, and I'm representing PAN this evening; a grassroots collaborative of parents from 50+ schools in the Vancouver District. Our belief is that ALL children have a right to publically-funded, high quality education in their own neighbourhoods, in educationally appropriate and seismically safe buildings with the resources and staff necessary to meet their learning needs. These budget cuts are a direct result of chronic structural underfunding by the BC Government, who has repeatedly rejected the recommendations of its own standing committee and the priorities of BC citizens who support increasing funding to public education. While the Ministry of Education talks about the "unprecedented funding increases to school boards" we know that today in Vancouver, even accounting for the drop in enrollment, 82 million dollars in funding would be required to restore educational services and supports to the level that existed in 2002.

We have reviewed all 75 pages of this preliminary budget - and we must reject it. These sweeping cuts affect ALL areas of our education system, which is already operating under barely sustainable conditions. We are NOT willing to participate in an exercise of pitting schools and communities against each other; forcing them to vie for programs, resources and staff that are all important in helping children learn. We are proud to be in the company of passionate groups and parents who have dedicated a lot of time and effort to advocating for endangered programs. Their commitment is an indication of the degree of impact that these cuts will have on children and families. As individuals, many of us, myself included, echo their cries. As a group, our role as PAN must be to advocate for ALL children in our schools, for their equitable access to education regardless of their race, gender, economic background, or their ability to advocate for it. When balancing a budget targets foundational supports for some of our most vulnerable students, we are witnessing the dissolution of our public education system and everything that it stands for.

While the unique challenges and complexities inherent within the Vancouver school district have exacerbated the magnitude of this shortfall.....we are not alone. Right at this very moment, communities all across BC are being devastated by cuts and forced closures, recreating the cycle of competition over and over again. We as parents have had enough! We call for UNITY in our district. We call for UNITY in our Province....in rejecting the budget cuts being felt everywhere. Together we must work to show we are not going to stand for the divisiveness this creates at every level in our public education system. We demand that government restore adequate and sustainable funding to meet the learning needs of all students according to their legal obligation under the School Act. BC's budget may be in the black...but public education is in the red. Join us in wearing red the day the budget is voted on in legislature!

Thank you

Presentation to the VSB Trustees and General Public, April 12, 2016, Van Tech

Hello, my name is Kathryn Ayres, and I work in 5 school offices as an administrative assistant, an extra clerical assisting the head secretary. If the VSB proposal is voted in, I and 22 other women will lose our jobs, which is devastating for some of us, but an increased burden for the secretaries left without our assistance because they will be forced to do 20% more work weekly but without any extra pay. They will work harder than they already do, and considering that's on average 5 hours overtime a week now, it would be a full day's worth, at many of the schools. What do we do, you might ask – isn't it just answering the phone and handing out band-aids to some of the cute children? Nope! Here's what we do.

1. We are in charge of all the school information, the data base. Every bit of information for every student at a school goes through us and that takes a lot of concentration because you don't want to make a mistake. We have to know hundreds of school board rules and how to enter information in the difficult software program. A correct database is essential for a 'modern' school!

2. We are trained "first aiders", there to help everyone in the school but most of our first aid is for the students. If someone is sick or injured, we have to take the time to decide how serious it is - too often we have to recommend a visit to the doctor - and sometimes we have to call an ambulance. A backup first aider in the elementary school, when there is no extra clerical, is one of the student support workers, someone doing one on one with a special needs students. If the office calls her or him for first aid, they have to bring their student with them or find someone to take over, which takes time. Sometimes they're on the other side of the school. Clearly, relying on the SSA for first aid is not practical.

3. We ALSO help the parents with registration, which is VERY time consuming. Many speak only a little English so we need time to communicate well with them.

4. We provide all administrative assistance to the principal and teachers; that frees them up to make them successful at what they do. When we're energized and efficient, it makes everyone else feel like everything is going well.

5. Finally, it's almost impossible for the secretaries to do the accounting without interruptions if the clerical support is not there.

With cuts, the main secretary has to do more work, even though they already do a lot of unpaid overtime, so there are going to be serious problems, such as:

1. Mistakes in the student records, mistakes in emergency contact information, mistakes that could affect their academic future. This is critical. More computer records mistakes will propagate into the future leading to time-consuming back-tracking, etc.

2. Not having the time to realize that someone needs to see a doctor that day. If you have only 3 minutes to sit with someone, instead of 10, can you notice signs of a concussion, or a hairline fracture from a fall in the gym? What if someone has an allergic reaction?

3. The principal and teachers will find their jobs more difficult, and their frustration will get passed on to the children, to the students.

4. The friendliness of the school will decline. It takes time to be sociable and helpful.

Overburdened Principals/Teachers/Secretaries will make a school's 'approachability' plummet in the eyes of both parents and public.

To sum up, laying off the admin assistants will lead to lesser quality of education. Period. And we know from experience it will also cause extra stress and illness in the secretaries, and, worse than that, lead to ever more parents taking their students out of public school and putting them into private schools.

Updated Preliminary Budget Proposals 2016/2017

Original Funding Shortfall	(27.26)
Henderson Annex Non Operational	0.58
Ministry Funding Update	2.63
Updated Funding Shortfall	<u>(24.05)</u>

Administrative Proposals	Page	Nature	FTE	Est \$M
Additional Lease Revenue	16	Ongoing		1.00
Benefits Compliance Review	17	Ongoing		0.10
Harassment Investigations Insourcing	18	Ongoing	(1.00)	0.08
Inflation (2015/16)	19	One-Time		0.24
Inflation (2016/17)	19	Ongoing		0.25
Benefits Premium Holidays	20	One-Time		0.23
Borrowing School Balances	21	One-Time		2.06
Change in PO Practice	23	One-Time		1.20
LIT Service Reductions	24	Ongoing	1.00	0.29
LIT Service Reductions	24	One-Time		0.38
Project Manager - Business Systems	26	Ongoing	1.00	0.12
Emergency Management Supplies	27	Ongoing		0.06
Furniture & Equipment	28	Ongoing		0.38
Material Services	29	Ongoing	1.00	0.06
School Based Office Support	30	Ongoing	22.40	1.08
Total Administrative Proposals			24.40	\$ 7.51

Facilities Proposals	Page	Nature	FTE	Est \$M
Space Closure	32	Ongoing	2.80	0.14
Custodial Supplies	33	Ongoing		0.10
Cafeterias	34	Ongoing		0.10
Inflation (2016/17)	19	Ongoing		0.08
Maintenance Service Reductions	35	Ongoing	10.00	1.00
Maintenance Service Reductions	35	One-Time	5.00	0.50
Parking at Schools	36	Ongoing		0.08
Facilities Planners	37	Ongoing	2.00	0.19
M&C Administration	38	Ongoing	2.00	0.21
Total Facilities Proposals			21.80	\$ 2.39

Educational Proposals	Page	Nature	FTE	Est \$M
Field Trip EOC Costs	39	Ongoing		0.34
Inflation (2015/16)	19	One-Time		0.16
Inflation (2015/16 & 2016/17)	19	Ongoing		0.14
DLS Services & Supplies	40	Ongoing		1.10
DLS Services & Supplies	40	One-Time		0.10
School Flex Budget	41	Ongoing		1.18

Educational Proposals	Page	Nature	FTE	Est \$M
School Based Support Staff Replacement	42	Ongoing		0.04
International Education Enrolment	43	One-Time	(4.76)	0.82
International Education Counsellor	43	Ongoing	(1.00)	(0.11)
VLN Services & Supplies	45	Ongoing		0.04
Elementary Prep time restructuring	46	Ongoing		0.45
Surplus Carryforward	47	One-time		3.13
Annex/Main School Configuration	48	Ongoing	4.00	0.37
Home Learners	49	Ongoing	1.00	0.09
Adult Education	50	Ongoing	1.17	0.10
Peer to Peer	51	Ongoing	4.00	0.40
Aboriginal Education Prior Years' Surplus	52	One-Time		0.20
Aboriginal Education School Support	52	Ongoing		(0.05)
Learning Technology Teacher Mentors	53	Ongoing	2.10	0.19
Gifted Teacher Mentor	54	Ongoing	0.80	0.07
Teacher-Librarian Teacher Mentor	55	Ongoing	0.40	0.04
Modern Languages Teacher Mentor	56	Ongoing	0.40	0.04
Athletic Coordinator	57	Ongoing		
Fine and Performing Arts Coordinator	58	Ongoing		
Literacy/Early Intervention Teacher Consultant	59	Ongoing	1.00	0.09
Anti-Racism/Anti-Homophobia Teacher Mentors	60	Ongoing	1.00	0.09
Brailist	61	Ongoing	1.00	0.06
Home Instruction Teachers	62	Ongoing	0.95	0.09
Early Intervention/Modern Languages Clerical	63	Ongoing	0.60	0.03
Multicultural Liaison Workers	64	Ongoing	2.00	0.12
Optional Elementary Band & Strings Program	66	Ongoing	5.86	0.40
Garibaldi Learning Services Clerical Support	67	Ongoing	1.00	0.05
District-Based Gifted Staffing	68	Ongoing	2.40	0.22
Career Information Assistants	69	Ongoing	9.00	0.58
District Vision and Hearing Teachers	70	Ongoing	1.00	0.09
ELL District Class Reduction	71	Ongoing	1.14	0.11
Additional Entitlements	73	Ongoing	2.29	0.21
SACY SSW	75	Ongoing		
School Based Vice Principals	76	Ongoing	1.46	0.25
Special Education Staffing	77	Ongoing	2.28	0.21
Secondary Teacher Staffing	78	Ongoing	22.00	1.99
International Education Teacher Staffing	79	Ongoing	6.67	0.61
Enhanced Services Literacy Teachers	80	Ongoing	4.00	0.37
Special Education Support Entitlements	81	Ongoing	5.00	0.27
Elementary Non Enrolling Staffing	82	Ongoing	5.00	0.46
Estimated Severance		One-Time		(1.00)
Total Educational Proposals			83.76	14.15
Total Proposals			129.96	24.05
Deficit Remaining				-

VSB KEY DATES for 2016-17 BUDGET

PUBLIC INPUT

Tuesday
April 12
7 - 11pm

Vancouver Tech. Secondary
2600 E Broadway
Large Gym

PUBLIC INPUT

Wednesday
April 13
7 - 11pm

VSB Education Centre
1580 West Broadway
Room 114

PUBLIC INPUT

Thursday
April 14
5 - 11pm

VSB Education Centre
1580 West Broadway
Room 114

Public Input on Revised 2016/2017 Budget Proposals

April 25 Monday 7pm

VSB Education Centre, 1580 West Broadway

FINAL DELIBERATION

April 28 Thursday 7pm

VSB Education Centre, 1580 West Broadway