VSB VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD

BOARD / COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 5:00 PM,
Education Centre Boardroom
1580 West 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. Delegations re: *2016/2017 Preliminary Budget Proposals*

Delegations will commence at 5:00 pm and will present at 5-minute intervals.

1. Parents from Norquay Early Mandarin Bilingual Program
2. C. Tsobanis
3. N. Sun
4. Families Against Cuts to Public Education – J. Stewart
5. C. Cordella
6. J. Sue
7. E. Sue
8. T. Van
9. Queen Alexandra Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – S. Bell
10. R. Nicolas
11. S. Helmer
12. Tyee Education Advocacy Committee – C. Willems and F. Shaw
13. Gold Advisory Committee – J. Bromley
14. Public Education Project – G. Giesbrecht
15. G. Rousseau
16. G. Lauder
17. R. Unruh
18. W. Park
19. V. Thomas
20. Career Information Assistants – M. Rajkumar and others
21. H. Ng
22. P. Paoluzzi
23. J. Lau
24. L. Fox
25. G. Avrahami
26. E. Lee
27. J. Borgaro
28. Maple Grove Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – G. Hutcheson
29. D. Mohabir
30. D. Kilgallin
31. R. Garen
32. Queen Mary Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – K. Findlay
33. Trans Alliance Society
34. Gordon Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – V. Stephens and P. Abraham
35. Charles Dickens Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – A. Sinclair
36. J. Kim
37. S. Bickerton
38. C. Baechler
39. N. Gaur

. . . cont.

40. A. Coutu
41. Queen Elizabeth Annex Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – K. Werker
42. L. Wilson
43. R. Fleming, MLA

IV. Motion to Rise and Report from the Committee of the Whole

V. Motion to Reconvene the Board Meeting

VI. Adjournment

Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) Program: A Bright Future

By Parent Advocates of EMB

VSB Presentation Spring 2016

Thank you VSB

for having the courage and vision to start the Early Mandarin Bilingual program and the commitment to see it through to high school.

VANCOUVER BOARD OF EDUCATION
School District No. 39
ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT
1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

October 20, 2011

Dear Parents of Children in the Mandarin Bilingual Program

Thank you so much for your comments about your child's experience in the new Mandarin Bilingual Program at Norquay. It is great to hear so many positive comments about how this year has begun. We hope you continue to feel this way about the program. At the same time, we do acknowledge that there are concerns, and we are committed to addressing them to the extent possible.

In our planning for this program, which took over two years of work, we considered all aspects of Mandarin second language learning and teaching. We examined models from across North America. We worked with the Chinese Language Institute at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Members of the Task Force visited Edmonton and Portland. Staff from Coquitlam came to visit the Task Force. Over that time we did make a number of decisions, but we also left some work for the ongoing implementation of staff in the program.

Some things are in policy. For example, from grades kindergarten through seven, there will be 50% instruction in Mandarin. We did not follow exactly either the Edmonton or the Coquitlam models, but through their example decided to teach in Mandarin the subjects that they had found to be the best for bilingual learners. These are Mandarin Language Arts, Music, Mathematics, Physical Education, and Career and Personal Planning.

One important decision made by the Task Force, and which is in policy, is that the program is for students who have English fluency. This is quite different from the programs in Edmonton and Coquitlam, for example, where many – sometimes most – of the children enter the program with Mandarin fluency and little English.

Another decision made early on was that this would be a bilingual program – not an immersion program. We set as our ultimate goal that students would be at a level of B1 in the Common European Framework of References for Languages by the end of grade twelve. This level is briefly described in the following language:

> *"Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and*

explanations for opinions and plans. Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans."

We deliberately did not choose the immersion model for our Mandarin program. The model of instruction for language learning chosen is for 50% of the day starting in kindergarten through grade three. This is different from full immersion in French where, as you probably know, the immersion program is 100% French in the primary grades.

Mandarin is a very difficult language to learn. We understand that given the difficulty of the language and the developmental level of the students, the teachers are not yet teaching at the full 50% target. As students become more comfortable with the language, and in the case of kindergarten students with school routines, teachers will gradually be increasing instruction in Mandarin until the four subjects will be taught wholly in Mandarin. We know from research that a model where a separate part if the day is identified for one language or the other is the most effective for learning a second language. That is the model the teachers are moving towards.

We are working with UBC on best practice as supported by the research. We have a commitment to continue to implement the program on this basis. We are also working with the teachers to make ongoing professional development and networking opportunities available so that they can continue to refine their practices. We will continue to communicate with parents about our plans and your experiences in the program.

One question was asked that was not related to the program content, but to the process. To be clear, it is in policy that there is "sibling priority". That means that if you have a child in the Mandarin Program, any siblings coming up will have immediate entry to the program. We are delighted that parents are already thinking ahead to this possibility!

Thank you again for your interest. We hope that you will continue to be happy with your child's experience in the Mandarin Bilingual Program. If you have questions about your child or their progress in the program, please let the principal, Tricia Rooney, know. We know she appreciates all your support. If there are other questions of a district nature, we are happy to follow up with you.

Yours truly,

Valerie Overgaard

Denise L. Johnson

Valerie Overgaard
Associate Superintendent
604-713-4594

Denise Johnson
Director of Instruction
600-713-5097

Why We Are Here

- Provide an overview of the EMB program and its benefits
- Showcase high demand and parent engagement
- Retain the Modern Languages Teacher Mentor (E12.6)

EMB Program Overview

- John Norquay Elementary School
  - East side between East 29th Avenue & Kingsway
- Program intake began in 2011
- 156 students, K-5 in 2015-2016

EMB Program Overview

- ~80% of students live outside catchment
- English proficiency required
  - 90% of families non-Mandarin speaking
- Goal: 50% Mandarin language instruction
- Curriculum is VSB/teacher developed

Benefits of EMB

- Program has reversed declining enrollment at John Norquay
- Drawing families to public education
  - 20% of respondents to our survey said their child/children would have gone to private schools or other districts were EMB not available
- Cognitive and social benefits
- Preparing students for the global economy

JUMP TO THE FRONT

Long-jumper Christabel Nettey is leaping into the spotlight. ▪ B6

BIRDMAN FLIES HIGH

Comedy cleans up on Oscar night, including best picture. ▪ B9

THE VANCOUVER SUN

LUNAR NEW YEAR: Thousands lined the streets of Chinatown on Sunday to enjoy the annual Lunar New Year festival and parade, including all the noise and colour that make it a special event.

Poult indus won't biose audit

Marketing board targets of animal

OPINION

Time for a transit plan that makes sense

STEPHEN HUME

35

WAYNE LEIDER/FROST/PNG

LUNAR NEW YEAR: Thousands lined the streets of Chinatown on Sunday to enjoy the annual Lunar New Year festival and parade, including all the noise and colour that make it a special event.

Vancouver Sun won't release tl audit reports un fied each grower and has invited consent to the d or any part of the make written re to the board e the information disclosed."

The board is

OPINION

Time that m

STEPHEN HUME

VANCOUVER SUN

Last week's poll shows firming up momentum.

So let's see the

Mandarin Chinese Most Useful Business Language After English

by John Lauerman

August 30, 2011 – 12:34 PM PDT

Mandarin, China's official tongue, is also the top language worldwide for business other than English, according to Bloomberg Rankings.

Mandarin, spoken by 845 million people, scored highest in a ranking of languages, excluding English, based on business usefulness. The ranking scored languages according to the number of speakers, number of countries where the language is official, along with those nations' populations, financial power, educational and literacy

High Demand

- 88 families listed EMB as their first choice in 2016
  - 55 families wait-listed
- Low attrition = good educational value
- Opportunity to attract even more students

High Parent Engagement

- Diverse, organized and active parents
  - Families representing 68.5% of students responded to our (parents) survey
- 75% of parents would enroll their child/children into an EMB high school regardless of location in Vancouver
- Great enthusiasm, energy and desire by parents to work with the staff and board to grow and improve the program

Asks

- Continued support and funding of the program
  - Retain the Modern Language position (E12.6)
- Strong focus going forward with EMB high school planning
  - 3 May meeting scheduled
- Partner together to sustain and grow EMB program

In Review

- The EMB program is a success
- This program has high demand and parent engagement
- Retain the Modern Language position (E12.6)
- Let's work together to make the EMB program even better for the future

In Closing, we would like to leave you with one last thought:

During this Budget process, while Trustees and Staff are struggling with what to lose, we ask that you also keep in mind what can be **gained and grown** with a little funding and attention. We think Early Mandarin is one such program that can be grown to reap a tremendous amount of educational, cultural, social and funding benefits.

Thank You!

謝謝

EMB Parent Survey (by EMB Parents)

Saturday, April 9, 2016

64 Total Responses

Families were asked only to complete survey once, but included number of children in EMB program.

Total EMB Students:	**14 Grade 5 Families**
	27 Grade 4 Families
	19 Grade 3 Families
	14 Grade 2 Families
	18 Grade 1 Families
	14 Kindergarten Families
	1 Unspecified

107 Students out of 156 = 68.6% Response Rate

Date Created: Wednesday, March 16, 2016

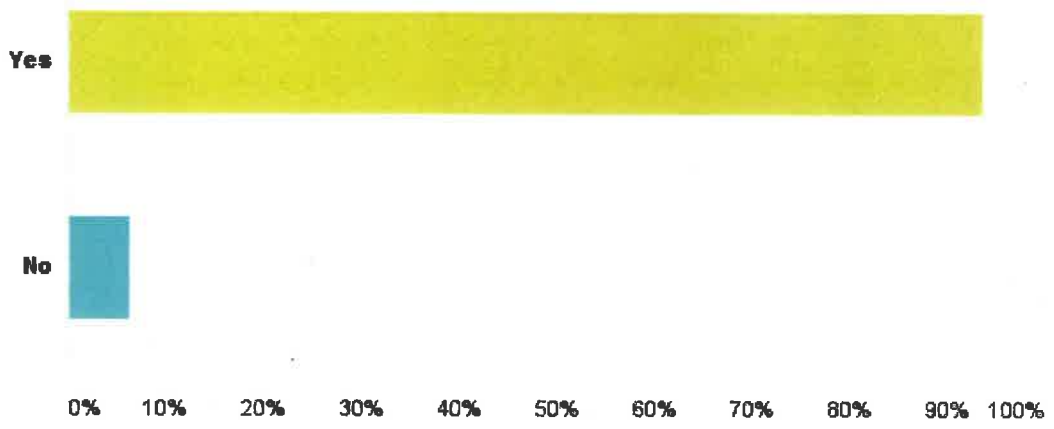
Complete Responses: 64

Q1: Family Name Q2: What Grade(s) are your child(ren) in?

Q3: When you first started at Norquay's EMB Program, was it your understanding that the program would continue onto Gr. 8 - 12?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0

*VSB Welcome letter signed by Valerie Overgaard, Associate Superintendent at the time and dated October 20, 2011 stated a commitment to parents that the EMB program will continue onto high school. See copy in Appendix.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	93.75%	60
No	6.25%	4
Total		64

Q4: If you were told EMB did not continue onto high school, would you have enrolled your child into the EMB program?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0

*Most EMB Parents would have chosen another program or gone to private school if they were told EMB high school would not be available for their children.

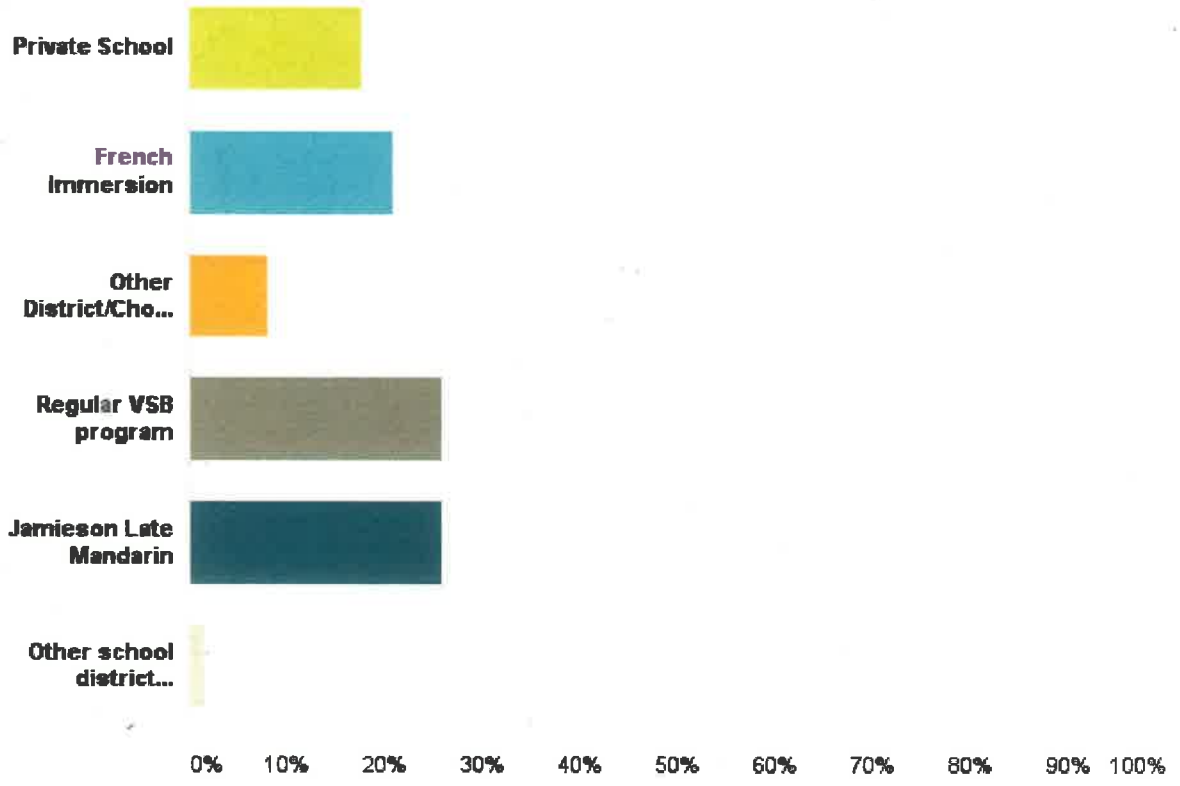
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	39.06%	25
No	39.06%	25
Other (please specify)	21.88%	14
Total		**64**

*5 of the "Other" said they would have considered Christian school or other programs

Q5: If your child did not get into the EMB program, where would your child have been enrolled? Choose only one.

Answered: 62 Skipped: 2

***3 of the 'Other' responses stated that parents were considering or were already in private schools or would consider another school district. Therefore, the EMB program attracted approximately 20% of respondent's students to remain in the district's public school.



Q6: Which of these options would you prefer for an EMB High School site. Rank them in order if more than one. (#1 being highest, #4 lowest. Do not need to rank all, can just choose one as #1)

Answered: 63 Skipped: 1

	1	2	3	4	Total	Score
A High School site close to Norquay	**53.49%** 23	**25.58%** 11	**16.28%** 7	**4.65%** 2	43	3.28
High School site on East side of Vancouver	**9.30%** 4	**48.84%** 21	**30.23%** 13	**11.63%** 5	43	2.56
Eric Hamber, so our EMB students can merge with Jamieson Late Mandarin students	**36.11%** 13	**19.44%** 7	**25.00%** 9	**19.44%** 7	36	2.72
We plan to attend EMB high school regardless of location	**46.81%** 22	**23.40%** 11	**6.38%** 3	**23.40%** 11	47	2.94

*74.6% of Respondents plan to attend EMB high school regardless of location

Q7: At Hamber students can take two Mandarin courses in Grade 8 and one in Grade 9 before transitioning into the appropriate level of the regular Mandarin stream in Grade 10.What high school elective courses would you be interested in having your child take in Mandarin? Choose all that apply

Answered: 63 Skipped: 1

*Advanced conversational Mandarin proficiency is the highest priority for EMB parents.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Advance Conversational Mandarin (similar to Hamber)	96.83%	61
Advance Mandarin Language Literature (similar to Hamber)	82.54%	52
Chinese Literature/Art in Mandarin	47.62%	30
Mathematics in Mandarin	25.40%	16
Prefer only Elective courses in Mandarin	19.05%	12
Total Respondents: 63		

Q8: According to Hamber website: http://go.vsb.bc.ca/schools/hamber/departments/Mod.Lan/Pages/Mandarin.aspxUpon completion of their Mandarin 12 (MMAN-12) course, students will reach level 4 or 5 of HSK (a standard Mandarin efficiency test).What are your expectations of your child(ren)'s Mandarin proficiency after completing the EMB program to Gr. 12?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0

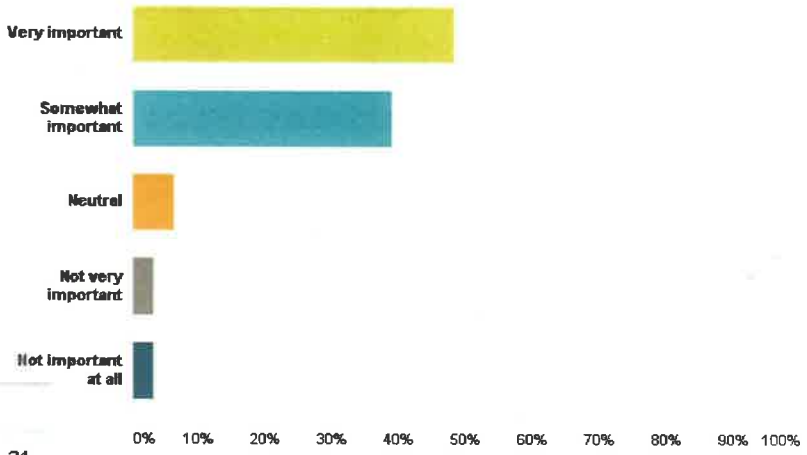
•EMB Parents want higher level of Mandarin proficiency. Or at least equivalent to Jamieson/Hamber Mandarin students.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Equivalent to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B2 or HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) Level IV/V – 1200 Vocabulary http://english.hanban.org/node_8002.htmCan understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	70.31%	45
Equivalent to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B1 or HSK Level III – 600 VocabularyCan understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	29.69%	19
Total		**64**

Q9: How important is it for your child(ren) to move onto high school with their EMB classmates?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0

*EMB Parents want to keep their children with their EMB friends in an EMB high school program.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Very important	48.44%	31
Somewhat important	39.06%	25
Neutral	6.25%	4
Not very important	3.13%	2
Not important at all	3.13%	2
Total		**64**

Q10: In Eric Hamber students can take two Mandarin courses in Grade 8 and one in Grade 9 before transitioning into the appropriate level of the regular Mandarin stream in Grade 10. See link in Q#9. In French Immersion in high school usually take 4 courses in grade 8 and 9; 3 in grade 10; 2 in grade 11 and one in grade 12. What would be your preference for EMB Mandarin course load in high school? Rank in order of preference. (#1 being highest, #4 being lowest)

Answered: 63 Skipped: 1

*63.5% (40/63) of EMB Parents would support 3 Advance Mandarin classes in Gr. 8

	1	2	3	4	Total	Score
3 Advance Mandarin Classes in Grade 8, 2 Advance Mandarin Classes in Grade 9 and 10, 1 Advance Mandarin Class in Grade 11 and 12	**32.69%** 17	**38.46%** 20	**23.08%** 12	**5.77%** 3	52	2.98
2 Advance Mandarin Classes in Grade 8 - 10, 1 Advance Mandarin Class in Grade 11 and 12	**25.45%** 14	**23.64%** 13	**41.82%** 23	**9.09%** 5	55	2.65
3 Advance Mandarin Classes in Grade 8 and 9, 2 Advance Mandarin Classes in Grade 10 and 11, 1 Advance Mandarin Class in Grade 12	**44.23%** 23	**23.08%** 12	**9.62%** 5	**23.08%** 12	52	2.88
2 Advance Mandarin Classes in Grade 8 and 9,1 Advance Mandarin Class in Grade 10 -12	**16.67%** 9	**16.67%** 9	**16.67%** 9	**50.00%** 27	54	2.00

HIGH DEMAND FOR EARLY MANDARIN BILINGUAL DISTRICT CHOICE PROGRAM

Waitlist numbers at school level were:

2011-12 -68

2012-13 -N/A

2013-14- 193

2014-15 -N/A

2015-16 - 149

2016-17 - 157

First Choice Waitlists	2014	2015
K FI Waitlist	283	261
Montessori Waitlist	111	105
Early Mandaarin Bilingual	65	57
Fine Arts	14	20
International Baccalaureate	0	6
Total First Choice Waitlist	473	449

Applicants by Program	2014	2015	2016
K FI First Choice Applicants	819	777	893
Montessori First Choice Applicants	171	176	181
Early Mandaarin Bilingual	87	86	88
Fine Arts	36	42	54
International Baccalaureate	39	27	36
Total First Choice Applicants	1152	1108	1252

Registration numbers for Langara's Mandarin Language Arts:

Sept 2014: 1,217 registrations
Sept 2015: 1,199 registrations
Jan 2016 to date (April 5, 2016): 1,125 registrations

NOTE: The above noted registration numbers are for K - 12 classes only for the Mandarin Language Arts courses ... quite popular ... consistently over 1,000 registrations!!

NOTE: There are ADDITIONAL registrations for the ARTS & MATH programs which are also taught in Mandarin.

Should you need additional information or clarification or have any further questions, please contact the following person at Langara :

Ruby Louie
CS Program Coordinator, Mandarin School
rlouie@langara.bc.ca

Early Mandarin Language

Programs in other districts

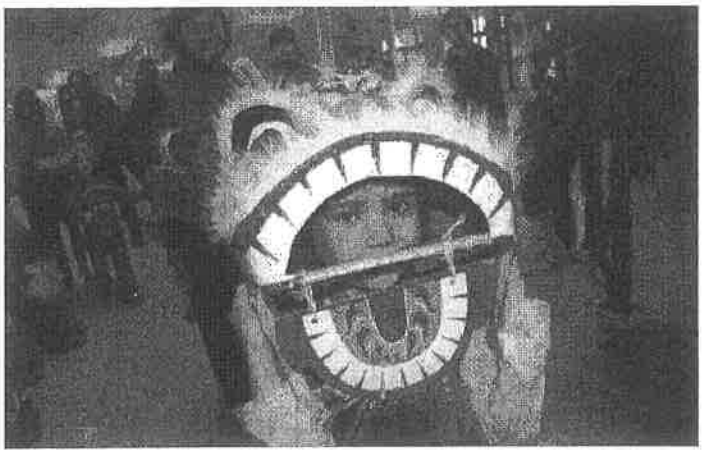
- Burnaby
- Coquitlam

Mandarin Language Program

The Burnaby Board of Education is committed to providing students with new and exciting programs. The Mandarin Language Program is an enriching and rewarding opportunity for students to celebrate and appreciate an additional language and culture.

Details regarding this program include:

- An option for children entering kindergarten to grade 6 in September 2016
- The program is located at Forest Grove Elementary School
- Students will study the regular core curriculum in English as prescribed by the Ministry of Education
- A component of the Language Arts curriculum will be delivered in Mandarin
- The program is designed for students who have strong English language skills



The program will develop:

- Mandarin oral communication skills
- Reading and writing skills (Chinese simplified language)
- An understanding of and appreciation for Mandarin Chinese culture

Application information:

A District Language Program Application Form must be completed and submitted to your neighbourhood school by the last day of February. Application forms are also available at any Burnaby Elementary School.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Study in Burnaby

Mandarin Bilingual Program

The Mandarin bilingual program is a program of choice that enables students to :

- Develop oral comprehension and fluency in Mandarin
- Develop the ability to read and write Chinese
- Gain an understanding of Canadian and Chinese cultures
- Develop a knowledge of and appreciation for diverse cultures while learning a second language
- Complete the requirements of the BC Curriculum

Subjects taught in English are :

- English Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Science
- Fine Arts

Subjects taught in Mandarin are :

- Chinese Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Health and Career Education
- Physical Education

Simplified Chinese script will be introduced in Kindergarten. The Hanyu Pinyin pronounciation system will be taught to accelerate the process of learning to read Chinese.

English Proficiency in Bilingual Program

Ai Mizuta
PhD Candidate, Language and Literacy Education
University of British Columbia

Introduction

Parents' concerns: Will my child's English suffer from attending a bilingual program?

Long standing research has consistently shown...

> Students of bilingual program do as well as, and often do better than students of English only program in Reading and Math

However, most studies are conducted in the context of Spanish- English Two Way Immersion program.

But What about Chinese Bilingual Program?

Program 1: Chinese Bilingual Program in Edmonton (Wu, 2005)

Program 2: Cantonese-English Two-Way Immersion Program in California (Lindholm-Leary, 2008)

Program 3: Mandarin-English Two-Way Immersion Program in California (Lindholm-Leary, 2008)

Program 1. Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Program

Over 30 years, over 2000 graduates

6 elementary schools, 4 junior high schools, 3 senior high schools

K-6: 50/50
Mandarin: Chinese Language Arts, Math, PE, Health
English: English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Art, Music

G7-9: 30/70 (300h/year)
E.g., Mandarin: Chinese Language Arts, Math

G10-12: 15/70 (150h/year)
Preparing for IB

Students' background

- The program accepts students from any linguistic background but the majority of students do not speak English as their first language.
- Some speak Mandarin, some speak other Chinese dialects and some speak English as their first language
- Some of them enter the school without having any English proficiency at all
- They even take students in different grade levels allowing different entry points for immigrant newcomers.
- G2-3, 500 characters, G4-5, 1100 ch, G6, 1700 ch

Program 1 Achievement level

Provincial Achievement Tests for English Language Arts 3 (G3)
2001, 2002, 2003, 2004
The average Chinese Bilingual score equals the average district score (71%)

Provincial Achievement Tests for English Language Arts 6 (G6)
2004, 2005, 2006, 2007
The average Chinese Bilingual score is slightly above district average (69/71)

The students performed consistently higher than the provincial and district in all **four subject areas**. Even a subject area they learned in Chinese such as Math is transferable in English test.

Program 2: Cantonese-English Two Way Immersion Program

Cantonese speakers and English speakers learning together

K-1: 80(C)/20(E)

G2-3: 70(C)/30(E)

G4-5: 30/70

G6-8: 1 class period

Program 3: Mandarin-English Two Way Immersion Program

Mandarin speakers and English speakers learning together

K-1: 70(C)/30(E)

G2-3: 60(C)/40(E)

G4-5: 50/50

G6-8: 2 class periods

Program 2 & 3 Achievement level

Total of 342 students in Grades 3-8

3%: English Learners 22-32%: EL proficient in English
Rest: Entered school proficient in English

California English Reading Achievement (CAT) Grade 7
- Chinese Immersion students scored above grade level
- Chinese Immersion students outperformed students at the same school in English only stream, district and state average

California English Language Arts (CST) Grade 3-8
- At all grade levels, most students are at grade level or high above.
- Grade 5, fairly similar to other schools in the same district, but outperforms in Grade 6 and 7.

Implications

The longstanding research finding that bilingual program does not undermine students' English proficiency is also applicable in Chinese-English bilingual program context.

Common Underlying Proficiency (Cummins, 1985) is validated : Subjects that are taught in Chinese can be tested in English

Highest achievers in English reading are highest achievers in Mandarin reading.
Lowest scorers in Mandarin reading as lowest scorers in English reading. Significant correlation between the languages.

Resources

Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Program
ECBEA Website
http://www.ecbea.org/index.php

Wu, J. Z. (2005). "Bilingual Education in Western Canada and Chinese Language Minority Students' Self Perceptions of their Citizenship and Ethnicity," Canadian and International Education / Education canadienne et internationale: Vol. 34: Iss. 1, Article 4. Available at: http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cie-eci/vol34/iss1/4

Chinese Two Way Immersion
Kathryn Lindholm-Leary's website
http://www.lindholm-leary.com/

Bilingual program in general
CARLA (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition)
What research says about immersion
http://carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/ImmersionResearch_TaraFortune.html

Thank you

Ai Mizuta
ai.mizuta.yu@gmail.com

Feel free to ask any questions .

Letters from EMB Parents and non-EMB Parent

To VSB in support of the program

3577 East 24th Avenue

Vancouver, BC V5R 1G7

April 9, 2016

Dear VSB School Broad Trustee,

My children have been in the Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) program since it began in 2011. My husband and I are very happy with the dedication of the Mandarin teachers and the support of the Administration for this program. We would like to thank the Vancouver School Board for having the vision to start and support such an amazing program.

We chose this program because it gives our children an opportunity to learn a second language that opens their opportunities in the future whether it be for careers, travel or social.

We also chose this program because we were told that the EMB program would continue into high school and that the students would be at a level of BI in the Common European Framework of References for Languages by the end of grade twelve.

My children are now in grade 4 and 5. We know there is much work ahead in selecting which high school the EMB program will be feeding into as well as developing the high school program. This has likely already begun and we were hoping to hear which high school our program will be feeding into and what the program will look like. Would you be able to share that information to us?

As the Trustees grapple with budget shortfalls and long term facilities planning, we want to emphasize, that the EMB does not have a negative cost to the school board. In fact, the program has attracted students from private schools as Bilingual Mandarin programs are not offered anywhere else in Vancouver. The Kindergarten class intake was reduced by the VSB from 1.5 classes to 1 class only after one year, a significant number of parents decided to send their children to private schools because they could not get into the EMB program. Well over 100 Kindergarten students were on the waitlist each year. Clearly the interest in this program is high. We encourage the VSB to consider expanding the program and increase intake to 2 Kindergarten class and secondary intake at Grade 4/5/6 so that more students can benefit from this program.

Warm Regards,

Bonnie To

Subject: Successes and the Future of the Early Mandarin Bilingual Program
From: Chris and Anna <waldoandelmo@gmail.com>
Date: 4/11/2016 12:57 AM
To: christopher.richardson@vsb.bc.ca

Dear VSB School Board Trustee Christopher Richardson,

I am writing to you as a parent with children in the highly successful Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) program at John Norquay Elementary School. Our family has been thrilled with the commitment and support you have given to this phenomenal program.

When we received that telephone call from the school on that fateful day in Feb 2011, it forever changed our lives. Our eldest daughter literally 'won the lottery' when we were informed that a spot would be available for her for Kindergarten. We immediately set out to make a number of financial decisions related to childcare and transportation so that she could attend Norquay, a school many kilometres from our home. At that point, we also decided to take private education off the table and boy, are we glad we did. We have been delighted with the dedication of the Mandarin teachers and the support of the Administration. Our little girl can rattle off Mandarin like a native speaker. (We are told this by Mandarin speakers as neither my husband nor I speak the language.) If only this opportunity could be available to more children in the public system, especially at a time when more business in this region is conducted in Mandarin. This has invariably been a topic of conversations I have had with numerous parents I have met at playgrounds, in libraries and at communities centres since my daughter started school. There is no shortage of families who would register their children if more spots are available. The extensive waitlist is a testimony to that.

Bravo to the Board Trustees for your wholehearted support! You displayed vision, courage as well as a great deal of hard work to introduce this outstanding program. Children of the VSB now have access to Mandarin learning that up to 2011, had only been available within the realm of private education.

With high school on the horizon, I look forward, with great anticipation, when plans for the secondary program are revealed. You too have our wholehearted support. The parents of Norquay will be delighted to assist in any way we can to help you maintain the commitment for a high school program.

With deep appreciation,

Anna Kam

Subject: From a concerned parent
From: Sharon Lee <sharonlee27113@gmail.com>
Date: 4/7/2016 9:59 AM
To: mike.lombardi@vsb.bc.ca, christopher.richardson@vsb.bc.ca, stacy.robertson@vsb.bc.ca, fraser.ballantyne@vsb.bc.ca, patti.bacchus@vsb.bc.ca, allan.wong@vsb.bc.ca, Janet.fraser@vsb.bc.ca, joy.alexander@vsb.bc.ca, penny.noble@vsb.bc.ca

Dear VSB School Board Trustee,

I am writing to you as a very concerned Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) parent at Norquay Elementary School. However, first, I would like to thank the Vancouver School Board for having the courage and vision to start and support such an amazing program that will give our children the ability to communicate, work and travel globally.

My children have been in the EMB program since September 2012 and we are very happy with the dedication of the Mandarin teachers and the support of the Administration for this program. They are in Grade 4 and Grade 1.

When we first started the program, we were told that the EMB program would continue on to high school and we made financial and life decisions based on this commitment by the VSB. My youngest is at a daycare just minutes away from Norquay. My husband and I have been considering high school options for our eldest who is in Grade 4 now and will graduate from Elementary school June of 2019. The oldest EMB children will graduate in 2 years and it concerns me that a high school program has not been decided. Since the beginning, EMB parents have advocated for adequate planning time for teachers and staff to develop a well planned and well implemented high school program for our students to continue on into.

However, with the recent EMB survey to parents sent out by Adrian Keough, it appears that the underlying message is that VSB is now considering whether or not to continue EMB into high school rather than gathering feedback to design and implement the EMB high school program. My children enjoy the program and have learned to acquire Mandarin language with their peers. Parents are very concerned that without the daily practice of Mandarin in Gr. 8-12, it is likely that our children will not be able to retain what they learned from K- Gr. 7 and therefore the students would have wasted 8 years being in this program.

This is quite an urgent matter, as our oldest students are starting Gr. 6 in September 2016 and a decision needs to be made by then.
Parents are rightfully upset by this apparent lack of commitment and follow through as promised by the VSB. Many parents would not have enrolled their children into a program that went no where. We hope that this is not the case.

As the Trustees grapple with budget shortfalls and long term facilities planning, I want to emphasize, that the EMB does not have a negative cost to the school board. In fact, the program has attracted students from private school as Bilingual Mandarin programs are not offered anywhere else in Vancouver and although there has been some reshuffling of students around the district, there is a significant portion of EMB students that without this program, VSB would have lost them to other districts or private schools. Further, because the Kindergarten class intake was reduced by VSB from 1.5 classes to 1 class only after one year, a significant number of parents decided to send their children to private schools because they could not get into the EMB program. These are not anecdotal stories, and EMB parents are in the process of gathering hard evidence to provide data showing the net gain to the VSB because of the EMB program. I know of many families who enrolled their kids in St. Francis Xavier private school because of their Mandarin program. If our EMB program accepts more children, they would have stayed in the public school system.

I recently spoke to a teacher who teaches high school level Mandarin from her home and she said there is a huge demand out there. For instance, an Iranian family I know of has enrolled his children in Mandarin classes in West Vancouver District. People from different backgrounds are interested in getting their children to learn the language. Many high school students would be inclined to learn Mandarin and be proficient in it.

As school districts around the world are attempting to provide their students the opportunity to learn to communicate on a global stage, we hope that the VSB will be courageous enough to continue this invaluable program into high school and show the community and VSB's large International group of students from China that Vancouver values them and supports its English speaking students to learn Mandarin.

I thank you again for providing our children the opportunity to learn Mandarin and to prepare them for the globalized world.

Sincerely,

Sharon Lee

Sent from my iPad

Vancy and Philip Leang
6343 Argyle Street
Vancouver, BC
V5P 3K4

VIA EMAIL

March 14, 2016

Vancouver School Board
1580 W Broadway,
Vancouver, BC
V6J 5K8

Dear VSB School Board Trustee:

We are writing to you as a very concerned Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) parents at Norquay Elementary School. First, we would like to thank the Vancouver School Board for having the courage and vision to start and support such an amazing program that will give our children the ability to communicate, work and travel globally.

Our child has been in the EMB program since September 2014 and we have been very happy with the dedication of the Mandarin teachers and the support of the Administration for this program. He is in Grade 1.

When we first started the program, we were told that the EMB program would continue on to high school and we made financial and life decisions based on this commitment by the VSB. We initially were going to put our son in private school but when we learned about the EMB program and was lucky enough to get in, we went this route instead. Since the beginning, EMB parents have advocated for adequate planning time for teachers and staff to develop a well planned and well implemented high school program for our students to continue on into.

However, with the recent EMB survey to parents sent out by Adrian Keough, it appears that the underlying message is that VSB is now considering whether or not to continue EMB into high school rather than gathering feedback to design and implement the EMB high school program. Parents are very concerned that without the daily practice of Mandarin in Gr. 8-12, it is likely that our children will not be able to retain what they learned from K- Gr. 7 and therefore the students would have wasted 8 years being in this program.

This is quite an urgent matter, as our oldest students are starting Gr. 6 in September 2016 and a decision needs to be made by then. Parents are rightfully upset by this apparent lack of commitment and follow through as promised by the VSB. Many parents would not have enrolled their children into a program that went no where. We hope that this is not the case.

As the Trustees grapple with budget shortfalls and long term facilities planning, we/I want to emphasize, that the EMB does not have a negative cost to the school board. In fact, the program has attracted students from private school as Bilingual Mandarin programs are not offered anywhere else in Vancouver and although there has been some reshuffling of students around the district, there is a significant portion of EMB students that without this program, VSB would have lost them to other districts or private schools. Further, because the Kindergarten class intake was reduced by VSB from 1.5 classes to 1 class only after one year, a significant number of parents decided to send their children

to private schools because they could not get into the EMB program. These are not anecdotal stories, and EMB parents are in the process of gathering hard evidence to provide data showing the net gain to the VSB because of the EMB program.

As school districts around the world are attempting to provide their students the opportunity to learn to communicate on a global stage, we hope that the VSB will be courageous enough to continue this invaluable program into high school and show the community and VSB's large International group of students from China that Vancouver values them and supports its English speaking students to learn Mandarin.

We thank you again for providing our children the opportunity to learn Mandarin and to prepare them for the globalized world.

Sincerely,

Vancy Leang

Subject: Our Future with the EMB Program
From: Cala Dyck <caladyck@hotmail.com>
Date: 3/17/2016 5:18 PM
To: christopher.richardson@vsb.bc.ca, stacy.robertson@vsb.bc.ca, mike.lombardi@vsb.bc.ca

Dear VSB School Board Trustee,

I first heard about the Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) Program at Norquay Elementary when my youngest was still in diapers and we lived in Italy. I nearly jumped for joy!!! Thank you for recognizing the value of advocating for this Program, we still feel very lucky to be a part of it! I began planning to come back to Vancouver (my hometown) to send my children to school here as soon as I heard of EMB. I secured work at St. George's private school on the west side and began planning for both my children to apply for the EMB Program. Finally after 4 years of trying (2 for my daughter and 2 for my son), my son was waitlisted and got in (2015 - grade 1 year) just as we were beginning to lose hope. Because I feel strongly about the importance of this Program's future I beg you to help me and other parents advocate for it's continued success at the high school level and its expansion at the Elementary level.

When we first started the program, we were told that the EMB program would continue on to high school and we based our move to back to Vancouver on this commitment by the VSB. Since the beginning, EMB parents have advocated for adequate planning time for teachers and staff to develop a well planned and well implemented high school program for our students to continue on into.

As a private school employee I have access to reduced rates for private school but choose not to take advantage of them by registering in the private system because we would lose out on the EMB Program - a Program not offered in the private system.

With the recent EMB survey to parents sent out by Adrian Keough, it appears that VSB is now considering whether or not to continue EMB into high school rather than gathering feedback to design and implement the EMB high school program. Parents are very concerned that without the daily practice of Mandarin in Gr. 8-12, it is likely that our children will not be able to retain what they learned from K- Gr. 7 and therefore the students would have wasted 8 years being in this program. I myself am a French Immersion student who no longer speaks French because my family moved away and I was not able to continue French Immersion in the high school years. EMB is a not an immersion program so continuing at the high school level is even more important for these students!

This is quite an urgent matter, as our oldest students are starting Gr. 6 in September 2016 and a decision needs to be made by then. Parents are rightfully upset by this apparent lack of commitment and follow through as promised by the VSB. Many parents would not have enrolled their children into a program that went no where. We hope that this is not the case.

As the Trustees grapple with budget shortfalls and long term facilities planning, I want to emphasize, that the EMB does not have a negative cost to the school board. In fact, the program has attracted students from private school as Bilingual Mandarin programs are not offered anywhere else in Vancouver and although there has been some reshuffling of students around the district, there is a significant portion of EMB students that without this program, VSB would have lost them to other districts or private schools. Further, because the Kindergarten class intake was reduced by VSB from 1.5 classes to 1 class only after one year, a significant number of parents decided to send their children to private schools because they could not get into the EMB program. Things should be going in the opposite direction, expanding, not shrinking! These are not anecdotal stories, and EMB parents are in the process of gathering hard evidence to provide data showing the net gain to the VSB because of the EMB program.

As school districts around the world are attempting to provide their students the opportunity to learn to communicate on a global stage, we hope that the VSB will be courageous enough to continue this invaluable program into high school and show the community and VSB's large International group of students from China that Vancouver values them and supports its English speaking students to learn Mandarin.

We/I thank you again for providing our children the opportunity to learn Mandarin and to prepare them for the globalized world.

Sincerely,

Cala Cordella
ccordella@stgeorges.bc.ca

On Apr 4, 2016, at 11:16 PM, Jose Lam <joselam62@shaw.ca> wrote:

Dear VSB School Board Trustee,

I am writing to you as a very concerned Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) parent at Norquay Elementary School. However, first, I would like to thank the Vancouver School Board for having the courage and vision to start and support such an amazing program that will give our children the ability to communicate, work and travel globally.

My child(ren) has(have) been in the EMB program since September xxxx and we are very happy with the dedication of the Mandarin teachers and the support of the Administration for this program. They(he/she) are (is) in Grade x (and Grade x).

When we first started the program, we were told that the EMB program would continue on to high school and we made financial and life decisions based on this commitment by the VSB. (You can fill in what life decisions you made - if you moved, gave up private school, etc to be in EMB at Norquay). Since the beginning, EMB parents have advocated for adequate planning time for teachers and staff to develop a well planned and well implemented high school program for our students to continue on into.

However, with the recent EMB survey to parents sent out by Adrian Keough, it appears that the underlying message is that VSB is now considering whether or not to continue EMB into high school rather than gathering feedback to design and implement the EMB high school program. Parents are very concerned that without the daily practice of Mandarin in Gr. 8-12, it is likely that our children will not be able to retain what they learned from K- Gr. 7 and therefore the students would have wasted 8 years being in this program.

This is quite an urgent matter, as our oldest students are starting Gr. 6 in September 2016 and a decision needs to be made by then.
Parents are rightfully upset by this apparent lack of commitment and follow through as promised by the VSB. Many parents would not have enrolled their children into a program that went no where. We hope that this is not the case.

As the Trustees grapple with budget shortfalls and long term facilities planning, we/I want to emphasize, that the EMB does not have a negative cost to the school board. In fact, the program has attracted students from private school as Bilingual Mandarin programs are not offered anywhere else in Vancouver and although there has been some reshuffling of students around the district, there is a significant portion of EMB students that without this program, VSB would have lost them to other districts or private schools. Further, because the Kindergarten class intake was reduced by VSB from 1.5 classes to 1 class only after one year, a significant number of parents decided to send their children to private schools because they could not get into the EMB program. These are not anecdotal stories, and EMB parents are in the process of gathering hard evidence to provide data showing the net gain to the VSB because of the EMB program.

As school districts around the world are attempting to provide their students the opportunity to learn to communicate on a global stage, we hope that the VSB will be courageous enough to

continue this invaluable program into high school and show the community and VSB's large International group of students from China that Vancouver values them and supports its English speaking students to learn Mandarin.

We/I thank you again for providing our children the opportunity to learn Mandarin and to prepare them for the globalized world.

Sincerely,

The above letter was written by an EMB Parent. I copied and pasted; meaning that I approve the well written letter.

However, I would like to add my own personal thoughts.

If I was asked the question of why I want my children to Learn mandarin; first, globalization has made the world closely interconnected, and includes : trading, technology, travel, etc…

Second, because China is currently the largest economy in the world after the United States, and will likely surpass the USA in 20 years or less.

Beside Mainland China, other places speaks also Mandarin where there are a large population of Chinese like Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia.

And although international business is being conducted in English in Asia, speaking in Mandarin to the locals is an advantage, and maybe a competitive advantage when dealing in business.

Two weeks ago, at a birthday dinner, I was talking to one of the owner of the "Vancouver Bullion and Currency Exchange" which have many branches in the Lower Mainland, and he said that if he spoke Mandarin, he would increase his business at 50% more. This is just an example of how certain business can grow,in Vancouver or in Canada, speaking the Mandarin Language.

Singapore-based , Jim Rogers, who famously co-founded hedge fund Quantum with George Soros before retiring at age 37, says he's bullish on China, bearish on the U.S.

And, his children speak fluent Mandarin.

Also, I know of two friends who in the past had inquire about the EMB program at Norquay, but were told the waiting list was very long. And , they knew of other families interested in the program.

I believe that by continuing the EMB Program through High School, would be a great benefit , not only to the student, but maybe for Vancouver, the Province, the Country, and society in general.

And although not every student in the EMB program could be successful, but a good percentage of those kids can achieve great things , such as representing the BC government in trades, technological exchange, strengthening relations with China; or working for a local multinational company that wants a presence in China.

The EMB program at Norquay is a good program. And so far, have been very successful. All parents are very happy. Maybe there are areas that can be improved.

I know that there are challenges in implementing this program into High School. I know that there are many factors to take in consideration, but is woth it. If successfully implementing this Program at the High School level, it will pave the way for other kids who wants to learn the language.

Many people say that this is the Century of China. Economically, China will lead the world in this century.

And I am sure that the EMB Parents will be very willing to support and help , in every way, the transition of the EMB Program from elementary to high school with the help of the Vancouver School Board, as we all Parents of the EMB Program are very concerned about the future of the Program.

Thank You for reading and excuse me for the errors on my writing.

Sincerely,

Jose Lam

Subject: Early Mandarin Bilingual-Highschool
From: Jennifer Eng <jpkceng@gmail.com>
Date: 3/17/2016 8:19 AM
To: "mike.lombardi@vsb.bc.ca" <mike.lombardi@vsb.bc.ca>, christopher.richardson@vsb.bc.ca, stacy.robertson@vsb.bc.ca, "fraser.ballantyne@vsb.bc.ca" <fraser.ballantyne@vsb.bc.ca>, "patti.bacchus@vsb.bc.ca" <patti.bacchus@vsb.bc.ca>, "allan.wong@vsb.bc.ca" <allan.wong@vsb.bc.ca>, Janet.fraser@vsb.bc.ca, joy.alexander@vsb.bc.ca, penny.noble@vsb.bc.ca
BCC: bklee@shaw.ca

Dear VSB School Board Trustee,

I am writing to you as a very concerned Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) parent at Norquay Elementary School. However, first, I would like to thank the Vancouver School Board for having the courage and vision to start and support such an amazing program that will give our children the ability to communicate, work and travel globally.

My oldest daughter has been in the EMB program since September 2011 and my youngest daughter entered in 2012. They are currently in Grade 5 and 3. We are very happy with the dedication of the Mandarin teachers and the support of the Administration for this program.

When we first started the program, we were told that the EMB program would continue on to high school and we made our decision based on this commitment by the VSB. *My oldest daughter attended an independent full time Montessori school in kindergarten and we made the decision to leave to attend the EMB.* My youngest daughter followed her. Since the beginning, EMB parents have advocated for adequate planning time for teachers and staff to develop a well planned and well implemented high school program for our students to continue on into.

However, with the recent EMB survey to parents sent out by Adrian Keough, it appears that the underlying message is that VSB is now considering whether or not to continue EMB into high school rather than gathering feedback to design and implement the EMB high school program. I am very concerned that without the daily practice of Mandarin in Gr. 8-12, it is likely that my children will not be able to retain what they learned from K- Gr. 7 and therefore my children would have wasted 7/8 years being in this program. I would not have enrolled my children in this program if I had known it would not continue into high school.

This is quite an urgent matter, as my oldest daughter is starting Gr. 6 in September 2016 and a decision needs to be made by then.

As the Trustees grapple with budget shortfalls and long term facilities planning, I want to emphasize, that the EMB does not have a negative cost to the school board. In fact, the program has attracted students from private school as Bilingual Mandarin programs are not offered anywhere else in Vancouver and although there has been some reshuffling of students around the district, there is a significant portion of EMB students that without this program, VSB would have lost them to other districts or private schools. Further, because the Kindergarten class intake was reduced by VSB from 1.5 classes to 1 class only after one year, a significant number of parents decided to send their children to private schools because they could not get into the EMB program. These are not anecdotal stories, and EMB parents are in the process of gathering hard evidence to provide data showing the net gain to the VSB because of the EMB program.

As school districts around the world are attempting to provide their students the opportunity to learn to communicate on a global stage, I hope that the VSB will be courageous enough to continue this invaluable program into high school and show the community and VSB's large International group of students from China that Vancouver values them and supports its English speaking students to learn Mandarin.

I thank you again for providing our children the opportunity to learn Mandarin and to prepare them for the globalized world.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Eng

2841 East 24th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5R 1E5

April 1, 2014

Vancouver School Board Trustees,
VSB Superintendent and Sr. Staff
Vancouver School Board
1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 5K8

Dear Sirs/Madams:

Re: Sir John Norquay Elementary Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) Program

My daughter is a Grade 2 student in the Norquay EMB Program. My second daughter has been accepted and will be starting Kindergarten in the same program this coming September. I also have a third daughter who we hope will be entering the program in three years.

I am writing this letter to say how grateful I am for the program. My husband and I are both first generation Canadian-born Chinese and we do not speak Mandarin. After just three years in the program, my eldest daughter, Emma, can speak fluently, read and write in Mandarin. I am thrilled! Prior to entry in the program, Emma was enrolled in a private school. We even forfeited our private school deposit when we were fortunate enough to win a spot in the EMB program. We do not regret the decision. It has changed our lives – and especially the lives of my girls.

Emma loves school and she loves her teachers. She has been blessed with two wonderful teachers – Ms. Pinky Kwan (K and Gr 1) and Ms. Cathy Weng (Gr 2). They are compassionate, caring and supportive. They are passionate about not just teaching Mandarin to the children, but weaving the language into the day-to-day activities of the children. I volunteer in and outside of the classroom, and I have witnessed teaching at its best.

As a parent from the inaugural year, I am very excited to see the growth and success the program has achieved! Parents from the program care deeply for it and many have made sacrifices to have their children participate in it. Many have also made tremendous contributions of time and effort to support the entire school community – through volunteering and fundraising. Since February, the school children have been playing on a brand-new playground. We love our school and want the entire school to flourish.

As I have three girls, we are committed to the EMB program for many more years to come. And I would very much like to see the program continue on to and through secondary school. I would like to see my daughters and their classmates become truly bilingual.

Thank you for your time, consideration and ongoing support for the EMB program.

Sincerely,

Lisa Chong

Lisa Chong, B.Com, MBA

Vivian Lee

455 West 17 Avenue

Vancouver, BC

V5Y2A1

April 2nd , 2014

Vancouver School Board

1580 West Broadway

Vancouver BC

Dear Vancouver School Board Trustees,

RE: EARLY MANDARIN BILINGUAL PROGRAM NORQUAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) Program at Norquay Elementary School is an excellent program and I am proud that my children are part of this choice program. I have 3 children and the eldest is currently enrolled in the Grade 2/3 split EMB class. My eldest started in the program in kindergarten and he is able to read, write, and speak Mandarin with ease. My daughter will be starting kindergarten this fall, September 2014. My third child will commence in the EMB program in 2018. Had my son not been fortunate to enter this program through the lottery system in 2011, we would have enrolled him in private school as he was accepted into West Point Grey Academy. However, we chose to enroll him in the EMB program at Norquay School as we wanted our children to be well versed in the Mandarin language and trusted that the Vancouver School Board Public School EMB program would succeed.

With 3 children going through this program from one of hundreds of families, you will see the benefit of this program in this Vancouver district and the necessity to include a high school component to move our children forward in the Mandarin program. It is hoped that funding will continue beyond the grade 7 curriculum and into high school. In addition, with the high numbers of applicants, increasing intake at Norquay for kindergarten or opening another EMB program in a school in the west side location would be welcomed with overwhelming response.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me at 604-325-2175.

Best Regards,

Vivian Lee

Marc 13'14

To the Vancouver School Board,

I am writing in regards to the VSB Mandarin Immersion Program. I applied for Kindergarten for my son Jordan Shum for the 2014 School Year. I was informed that acceptance was based on a lottery. I know of a few friends that are also interested in this program. Unfortunately, I was wait listed at #75. Since Mandarin is important to me, I decided instead to go into the private school system + applied to St Francis Xavier. My friend Jenny Cho has done the same.

There seems to be a great demand for this program and not enough positions.

I believe that in Vancouver there is a much bigger demand for Mandarin schooling. I have talked to many friends with young children and they feel the same way.

It would be of great value to have more positions in this program, as it would help parents keep their children in the public school system.

Thank you for your consideration,

TARA KIM

Research Articles on Benefit of Bilingual Education

March 25, 2014

Two-language instruction best for English-language learners, Stanford research suggests

A partnership between the Graduate School of Education and San Francisco Unified School District examines four ways of teaching English Learners.

BY ANDREW MYERS

Researchers examined student performance in various SFUSD English learning programs (Photo: Sonia Savio)

Like a growing number of school systems across the country, San Francisco Unified School District is tasked with educating increasing rolls of students for whom English is not their first language. In the United States, the school-aged population has grown a modest 10 percent in the last three decades, while the number of children speaking a language other than English at home has soared by 140 percent.

Against this backdrop, researchers at the Stanford Graduate School of Education and San Francisco Unified School District are examining student performance in various types of English language learning programs.

The preliminary findings have been the subject of a series of public presentations and have yielded two papers that are undergoing review.

The first focuses on how long it takes non-English-speaking students to reach English proficiency and be reclassified out of English Learner status. The second looks at the same students' academic trajectories over time, comparing outcomes of four English Learner instructional program types (see sidebar). Both studies examine differential program effects by ethnicity.

The results show that while students in English immersion programs perform better in the short term, over the long term students in classrooms taught in two languages not only catch up to their English immersion counterparts, they eventually surpass them both academically and linguistically.

The researchers will present findings at a meeting of the SFUSD School Board on Tuesday, March 25. The meeting starts at 6 pm.

In their study, the researchers identified a group of about 18,000 English Learner students in the San Francisco school system who entered kindergarten as early as the fall of 2001. They were enrolled in four distinct linguistic instructional environments, and the researchers followed their progress for 10 years.

Much debate in the educational community centers on which type of educational approach works best to help non-English-speaking students learn English, as well as other subjects such as math, science and history, at the same time. Until recently, the discussion has been fueled largely by preconceptions and evidence from a set of relatively small-scale studies, because robust data on large numbers of English Learner students in diverse instructional programs was not yet available. The Stanford-SFUSD research team is among the first to do a large-scale quantitative analysis on the comparative efficacy of these programs.

"With this study we're interested in helping the district figure out what works best for those who matter most – the students," said Sean Reardon, professor of education and scholar at Stanford's Center for Education Policy Analysis who directed the study. "Unfortunately, in the past there has been precious little data and rigorous evidence; we wanted to see if we could provide better evidence to inform the scholarly debate."

Adding data to the debate

Among the more significant findings, Reardon and his colleagues discovered that students in English immersion classrooms perform better than those in two-language classrooms in the early grades, but those in the two-language programs catch up or even surpass their counterparts by middle school.

Although the study found that students in English immersion programs have a better academic performance by second grade than students in programs that teach in both English and another language, this pattern changes a few years later. By middle school, the students in the two-language programs score substantially above students in the English-only programs on a range of metrics.

Take, for example, students' performance on the state's English Language Arts test. Although English Learners in the "Dual immersion" program score 0.15 standard deviations below their peers in English immersion in this subject in second grade, the rate of growth of their test scores is so fast that by fifth grade onward their scores surpass those of their peers in English immersion. By eighth grade they score about 0.2 standard deviations *above* their peers in English immersion.

"I think the big finding is that, by and large, students – particularly Latino students – who start out in the two-language programs have very different later trajectories than those starting in English Immersion," Reardon said. "A lot of people worry that students in bilingual and dual immersion programs might never catch up, but this study shows convincingly that they do catch up and, in many ways, outperform their peers over time."

The researchers gathered data on the diverse population of English Learner students in SFUSD. They then weighed such factors as what program the students were in, their initial level of English proficiency, and what their parents' preferences were for the type of program their children would attend. They then examined how that cohort performed academically over the next decade.

Gathering valuable data for this type of inquiry has been a challenge in the educational policy community. The research effort needed to build a solid understanding of such questions can be considerable, and even then, many factors confound the data analysis. Grant writing for this particular study began more than four years ago, Reardon said, and the data gathering effort started – in collaboration with the San Francisco Unified School District – in earnest more than three years ago.

Tying schools to scholars

The study is part of an unusual partnership between the GSE and the San Francisco school district. The two organizations are working hand-in-hand to select research questions that are both of pressing importance to the district and that are relevant to educators nationwide.

The initiative offers Stanford researchers unprecedented access to SFUSD data, while encouraging close collaboration between researchers and practitioners, who have direct experience in what is happening in the classroom.

The English Learner research is one of several dozen research projects under way, including a study of the benefits of an iPad mathematics game and efforts to identify students at highest risk of failing to complete high school.

Christina Mei-Yue Wong, special assistant to SFUSD Superintendent Richard Carranza, and Ritu Khanna, assistant superintendent, worked closely with Reardon and his team of researchers to structure and conduct the study.

Wong noted that since 1974, the district has provided bilingual education programs to support English Learners' access to the core curriculum. While California voters placed severe restrictions on bilingual education in 1998 with the passing of Proposition 227, SFUSD used a system of parental waivers to allow them to continue offering two-language instruction among other options for English Learners. But it was not known how two-language approaches compared with English only approaches.

"As we grew language pathways, longitudinal achievement data became critical to affirming their academic achievement," Wong said. "The district's partnership with the Stanford research team helped validate the district's investment while we were also able to build our respective capacities in pathway design and data analysis."

SFUSD proved a perfect test bed for the study, Reardon said. It has a large number of English Learners and the wide range of instructional programs.

"San Francisco Unified is a remarkably diverse school system where there are students who speak English, Spanish and Cantonese, of course, but 68 other languages as well," he said.

Like many things related to education today, however, the issue of bilingual classrooms is complex and easily influenced by preconceptions. Reardon cautions against looking past the data.

"One of the big arguments against bilingual education is that it may do students a disservice because they don't learn English well and also suffer academically. Others contend that English Learners in English immersion classrooms are suffering because they spend the first couple years not knowing what's going on," he said. "Our data suggest that students in two-language classrooms—those where they are taught both in English and their first language—do better if we just give them enough time. Focusing on the long term is key."

Looking ahead

The researchers hope in the future to explore another related question: Whether students who are in the two-language programs have greater fluency in a language other than English, as compared with English Learners enrolled in the English immersion program. They have not yet been able to assess this, because San Francisco, like almost all school districts, does not routinely administer comparable tests of proficiency in languages other than English.

Reardon said that he is looking forward to the two papers undergoing peer review. The GSE-SFUSD partnership decided to make the findings public before that process was completed, as the results are being widely discussed, and it is important to have a statement on the record of what has been accomplished to date.

The study was supported by a grant from the Institute for Education Sciences, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. Ilana Umansky is lead author of the study on EL's English proficiency and reclassification outcomes. Rachel Valentino is the lead author of the study on EL academic trajectories. Both are doctoral candidates at the Center for Education Policy Analysis.

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Health & Science

Study shows that people who speak two languages have more efficient brains

By Tanya Lewis November 18, 2014

People who speak two languages may have brains that are more efficient at language processing and other tasks, new research suggests.

Scientists have long assumed that the "bilingualism advantage" — the enhanced ability to filter out important information from unimportant material — stems from how bilingual people process language. The new study confirms that assumption and goes on to suggest that bilingual people are more efficient at higher-level brain functions such as ignoring irrelevant information, said Ellen Bialystok, a psychologist at York University in Toronto, who was not involved in the research.

Working harder

In the study, published last week in the journal Brain and Language, brain scans showed that people who spoke only one language had to work harder to focus on a single word.

People who are bilingual are constantly activating both languages in their brain, choosing which to use and which to ignore, said the study's leader, Viorica Marian, a linguistic psychologist at Northwestern University.

Compared with people who speak only a single tongue, "bilinguals are much better at ignoring irrelevant words," Marian said.

Brain bodybuilders

In previous studies of people's eye movements, Marian and her colleagues found that when bilingual people heard a word in one language, they often looked at objects whose names sounded similar to that word in their second language. In the new study, the researchers looked at how the ability to filter information manifests itself in the brain.

The researchers used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to scan the brains of 17 people who were fluent in both Spanish and English and 18 who spoke only English.

During the experiment, volunteers heard the name of an object and simultaneously were shown a picture of that object, as well as an object with a similar-sounding name, and two unrelated objects. For example, they might hear the word "cloud" and see pictures of a cloud, a clown and two other things. As fast as they could, the volunteers had to pick the picture that showed the word they heard.

Bilingual people were no faster at performing the task than monolinguals. However, their brain activity was markedly different, the scans revealed.

The brains of people who spoke only one language lit up much more than those of their bilingual counterparts in regions involved in controlling higher-level functions, including suppressing competing word meanings. In other words, monolinguals' brains had to work much harder to perform the task, the researchers said.

The researchers compared the task with lifting weights at a gym. "The bilingual has to lift more weight than the monolingual, because bilinguals experience competition within and between both their languages while listening to speech," the researchers said in an e-mail. "But the bilingual is also stronger, because they've been mentally 'working out' like this for their whole life."

Bilingual benefits

Other scientists praised the research team for its approach to studying the brain activity of bilingual people. "This study fills in one of the important missing pieces in our understanding of how bilingualism leads to cognitive benefits," Bialystok said.

Most of the previous research on the benefits of bilingualism has focused solely on behavior, which has drawn criticism from some scientists.

"There is actually a big discussion about whether the bilingual advantage exists or not," said Jubin Abutalebi, a cognitive neurologist at the University San Raffaele in Milan, Italy.

The new study added to the field by showing that the task of filtering information activates different brain areas in bilinguals and monolinguals, Abutalebi said.

Knowing multiple languages may have other benefits, too. In a previous study, Marian and her colleagues found that bilingual children were able to ignore classroom noise more easily than monolingual children.

Some research suggests that being bilingual may also help stave off Alzheimer's disease and dementia for a few years by keeping the brain nimble and increasing the amount of gray matter, though other studies have had conflicting results. More research on that issue is needed, according to the Mayo Clinic.

— Live Science

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Mandarin-language classes growing in popularity in Metro Vancouver

CHUCK CHIANG
More from Chuck Chiang (HTTP://VANCOUVERSUN.COM/AUTHOR/CHUCKCHIANG3)

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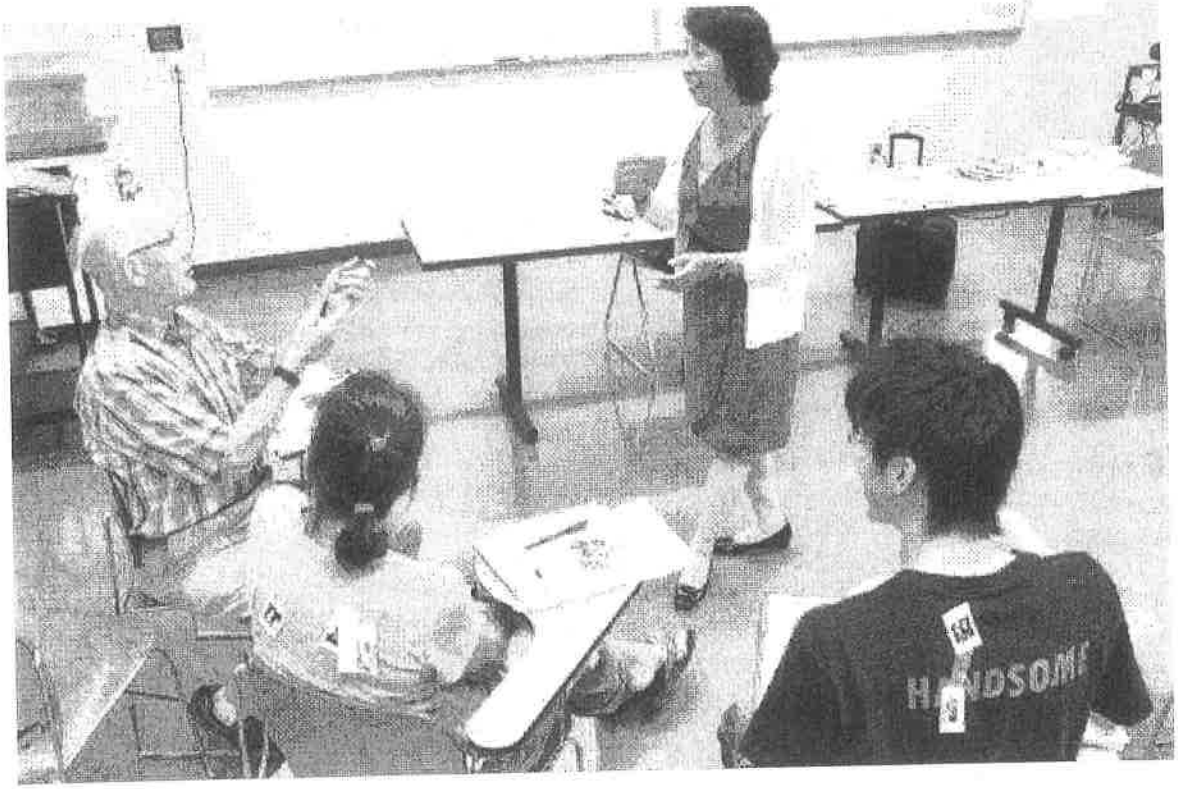

UBC Continuing Studies instructor Frieda He teaches a Mandarin-language class.

METRO VANCOUVER — Mandarin Chinese is a favourite choice when it comes to learning a new language, despite a lack of resources for educators and recent controversies in the community, local schools say.

At UBC's Continuing Studies program, which offers non-credit courses for adult students, Mandarin ranks second among the school's most popular foreign language courses, behind only French and ahead of Spanish.

Program leader Nina Parr said UBC has about 200 adult students registered in its Mandarin classes at any time, and usually about two-thirds are beginners. The overwhelming reason students are taking up the language appears to be career advancement.

"It's not necessarily that they have jobs where they need to speak Mandarin," Parr said. "It's more that people in their 20s and even early 30s feel like the language is an added benefit for them. To be able to say to an employer: 'These are all the skills I have, and I have a basic communication level in Mandarin.' It's just an extra bonus to have that skill, especially in Vancouver."

Much of the interest for younger students at the undergraduate level is about studying a foreign language and culture, said Ross King, head of UBC's Department of Asian Studies.

"You would expect a lot of students to take an Asian language for career- and business-related reasons," said King, who noted that UBC has about 400 undergrads taking Mandarin classes. "Instead, the reasons are often idiosyncratic, cultural and personal — because of somebody they know, or because of pop culture, martial arts, a boyfriend or girlfriend, Chinese cinema, whatever."

Interest in Mandarin is equally high at Langara College, where the dean of Continuing Studies, Daniel Thorpe, said there are 400 students enrolled in the school's Mandarin Centre, a program offering classes to both children and adults.

Thorpe said that while the school initially focused on children's programs, the percentage of adult learners has steadily climbed in the past decade, reaching about 33 per cent of the total student count as of this year. He said about 10 per cent of the students are not from the Chinese-Canadian community.

"The bulk of (students) has always been first- and second-generation (Chinese-Canadian) parents wanting their kids to know the language," Thorpe said. "But in the last couple of years, there's certainly an increase in non-Chinese students showing up as well, just because parents think it would be good for them to learn some Mandarin."

There has been controversy about the language in recent years. Chinese-only store signs have been hotly debated in Richmond, and a group of English-speaking condo owners recently filed a complaint with the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal over a decision by other owners who insist on conducting strata meetings only in Mandarin.

But such issues are unlikely to dampen the language's popularity for students, said David Spaulding, who founded the Crocodile Mandarin School specifically targeting non-Chinese speakers in 2008.

"I think it's inevitable, really. It's going to grow," said Spaulding, whose school has steadily expanded to five locations and 300-plus students. "When I started this school, I thought there would be some kind of historic event that would make everyone suddenly aware of the importance of Mandarin. ... But it's okay if it grows gradually."

UBC's King said rising public interest in learning languages like Mandarin is connected to Canada's growing trade and cultural ties with China. But a lack of resources has limited the "Asia competency" of Canadians compared to other western countries.

"Certainly, no one is saying everyone should learn Chinese," King said. "But friendly competitors like Australia, New Zealand, and every single U.S. state along the west coast have been doing more for many years. There are no meaningful top-down incentives in B.C. for students to tackle Chinese or other Asian languages.

"If the B.C. and Canadian governments invested more in Asian language education ... the number of students would probably double overnight."

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The NEW YORK TIMES

SundayReview

The Superior Social Skills of Bilinguals

Gray Matter

By KATHERINE KINZLER MARCH 11, 2016

BEING bilingual has some obvious advantages. Learning more than one language enables new conversations and new experiences. But in recent years, psychology researchers have demonstrated some less obvious advantages of bilingualism, too. For instance, bilingual children may enjoy certain cognitive benefits, such as improved executive function — which is critical for problem solving and other mentally demanding activities.

Now, two new studies demonstrate that multilingual exposure improves not only children's cognitive skills but also their social abilities.

One study from my developmental psychology lab — conducted in collaboration with the psychologists Boaz Keysar, Zoe Liberman and Samantha Fan at the University of Chicago, and published last year in the journal Psychological Science — shows that multilingual children can be better at communication than monolingual children.

We took a group of children in the United States, ages 4 to 6, from different linguistic backgrounds, and presented them with a situation in which they had to consider someone else's perspective to understand her meaning. For example, an adult said to the child: "Ooh, a small car! Can you move the small car for me?" Children could see three cars — small, medium and large — but were in position to observe that the adult could not see the smallest car. Since the adult could see only the medium and large cars, when she said "small" car, she must be referring to the child's "medium."

We found that bilingual children were better than monolingual children at this task. If you think about it, this makes intuitive sense. Interpreting someone's utterance often requires attending not just to its content, but also to the surrounding context. What does a speaker know or not know? What did she intend to convey? Children in multilingual environments have social experiences that provide routine practice in considering the perspectives of others: They have to think about who speaks which language to whom, who understands which content, and the times and places in which different languages are spoken.

Interestingly, we also found that children who were effectively monolingual yet regularly exposed to another language — for example, those who had grandparents who spoke another language — were just as talented as the bilingual children at this task. It seems that being raised in an environment in which multiple languages are spoken, rather than being bilingual per se, is the driving factor.

You might wonder whether our findings could be explained as just another instance of the greater cognitive skills that bilingual children have been observed to have. We wondered that, too. So we gave all the children a standard cognitive test of executive function. We found that bilingual children performed better than monolingual children, but that the kids who were effectively monolingual yet regularly exposed to another language did not. These "exposure" children performed like monolinguals on the cognitive task, but like bilinguals on the communication task. Something other than cognitive skills — something more "social" — must explain their facility in adopting another's perspective.

In a follow-up study, forthcoming in the journal Developmental Science, my colleagues and I examined the effects of multilingual exposure on even younger children: 14- to 16-month-old babies, who are hardly speaking at all. In this study, led by Zoe Liberman and in collaboration with Professor Keysar and the psychologist Amanda Woodward, babies were shown two versions of the same object, such as a banana, one of which was visible to both the infant and an adult, the other visible to the baby yet hidden from the adult's view. When the adult asked the baby for "the banana," the baby might hand her either object — both were bananas, after all — yet if the baby understood the social context, he would reach more often for the banana that the adult could see.

We found that babies in monolingual environments reached equally often for the two bananas. Babies in multilingual environments, including those who were exposed to a second language only minimally, already understood the importance of adopting another's perspective for communication: They reached more often for the banana that the adult could see.

Multilingual exposure, it seems, facilitates the basic skills of interpersonal understanding. Of course, becoming fully bilingual or multilingual is not always easy or possible for everyone. But the social advantage we have identified appears to emerge from merely being raised in an environment in which multiple languages are experienced, not from being bilingual per se. This is potentially good news for parents who are not bilingual themselves, yet who want their children to enjoy some of the benefits of multilingualism.

Katherine Kinzler is an associate professor of psychology and human development at Cornell University.

A version of this op-ed appears in print on March 13, 2016, on page SR10 of the New York edition with the headline: Bilinguals' Superior Social Skills. Today's Paper|Subscribe

The Bright: What's New in Education https://medium.com/bright

Peter Willhoite Dec 18, 201512 min read

How Learning Mandarin Is Changing The Hearts, Minds, And Brains Of Kids

Will we all be speaking Mandarin by 2050?

Rena was six when she first started at Yu Ming Charter School in Oakland. She knew only a few words of Mandarin. "I thought it was weird that they [the teachers] were talking and I didn't really understand," she says. "I didn't realize that it would sound so different and look so different. A lot of times, other kids would translate for me." Now, in fifth grade, Rena's Mandarin is crisp and clean.

Rena is having a sleepover at Rosa and Sonia's house in the Berkeley Hills, all dark wood and sweeping vistas. You can see the Marin Headlands and the San Francisco skyline. The girls all attend Yu Ming together—Rosa is in fifth grade, like Rena, and Sonia is in third. Their parents, Cynthia Li and David Hochschild, are actually longtime friends of my wife's. They've invited me over so I can learn more about immersion schools for a piece I'm writing. (Full disclosure: I also have a slightly personal interest. My wife is Chinese, and as we prepare to start a family of our own, this kind of thing is on our minds.)

Yu Ming is what's known as a "two-way dual immersion program"—50 percent Mandarin speakers and 50 percent non-Mandarin speakers so the two groups can learn from each other. Li is a doctor. She was born in Texas to Chinese parents. She speaks Mandarin fluently but admits she's a bit rusty. Hochschild is a white "Northeasterner." And while he claims he can "order some stuff at restaurants," he says he is "definitively not a Mandarin speaker."

The girls are sitting on the living room floor in the Berkeley house, recalling how nervous and confused they were when they first arrived at Yu Ming. It's hard to believe this given how they seem now: Rena reads an odd story aloud about a boy who escapes a car accident and takes refuge in a tree, and then she translates it into English without batting an eye. They show me some of their journal entries that they keep for school—in Mandarin! Beautifully drawn black characters document trips to the zoo, Labor Day weekend activities, and so on.

They tell me that sometimes they even think in Mandarin now. "When I was learning my times tables," Rosa says, "the only way I could remember it was by saying it and repeating it in Chinese, because that's how I learned it. And my mom would be like, 'What's five times five?' I would go, '*Wǔ wǔ èr shí wǔ*...25.'"

More than half of the world's population is bilingual, but less than 20 percent of people in the United States speak a second language. Presidio Knolls School (PKS) is an elementary school off 10th Street in downtown San Francisco. It's one of 200 foreign language immersion schools in California, part of a growing trend in education to reverse what Lee Drolet, head of school at PKS, refers to as our "lagging in language comprehension" problem.

There are actually more than 1,000 immersion programs in the United States; over half are Spanish-language programs, while less than 20 percent are Mandarin. But the tide is changing: In 2005, there

were just 19 Mandarin immersion programs around the country, whereas today there are more than 200—and not only in states like California with large Asian populations, but also in places like Casper, Wyoming, and Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

The demographics of these programs vary by state and by location, but I was surprised to learn that none of these schools are dominated by native speakers. At Yu Ming with 257 students—45% are Asian and 37% "multiracial."At PKS, Drolet says, most students are not actually from Mandarin-speaking families, and there are just as many, if not more, students of other ethnicities as there are Chinese students. However, she says, it's not uncommon for parents who are ethnically Chinese but raised in American without any Mandarin, to send their children to PKS—it's a way for them to connect to their cultural background.

Drolet proudly runs through all the ways in which her students are benefiting from being part of an immersion program—"Heightened problem-solving abilities, attention, mental flexibility…"—but she says the importance of these programs goes way beyond the academic and intellectual.

"We're thinking not just about where these kids are in their world today, but what the world might look like in the future. We have a commitment to our students to have a global competency that gives them the comfort and abilities to succeed not just in the Bay Area, or the United States, but within our broad, global community."

In immersion programs, students study the same subjects as in traditional English-language schools—math, science, language arts, and social studies—they just do it all in the second language. Preschool and kindergarten students speak almost exclusively Mandarin, but that shifts (down to as little as 30% by middle school) as the students get older because by then, according to Drolet, "They're totally proficient in reading, writing, and speaking."

Bob Hillman has first- and third-graders who attend PKS. He used to be a successful musician, but now he's in marketing—though he is quick to add that he tries hard "not to work too much." Hillman and his wife are white and do not speak Mandarin, nor feel like they have to even though their children do.

His older son is part of the flagship class at PKS. Hillman describes how easily Mandarin came to his children: "It's just not that big of a deal to them. It's school. It just happens to be in Mandarin. They just do it. You've got to remember, for these kids, it's not a struggle. We have to get out of our adult heads. Yes, it would be impossible for us to get plopped into a work environment where they speak a new language, but for kids, maybe there's some cognitive dissonance at the beginning, but that fades so quickly."

Li describes a similarly rapid transition taking place for her children at Yu Ming. "Of course, they're totally frustrated at first, but even with complete non-speakers, it just takes a few months, and then they absorb it. They might not be speaking [Mandarin] fluently, but they understand everything that is going on."

Drolet talks about the power of immersive learning in terms of *meaning*, "So think about if you were a person going to another country as a child: Would it be more meaningful to sit in a classroom for an hour a day just being exposed to a language?

Or would it be more meaningful to be immersed in seeing, touching, feeling, experiencing the music of a language, all the different senses, having your teachers act out words and helping you to understand it in a connected way? You're hooking all the pictures and ideas together in your brain. The more we have meaning in our instructional setting, the more you have meaning around the big idea—whether it be maps, or how does the farm get to our table, or forces of motion and energy—if you can see that first hand and experience it, you make it mean something, and it's going to stick with you forever."

At the beginning especially, the teachers refuse to translate; they never break from Mandarin. But, says Li, "The teachers are really good at pantomime." Also, the kids are really good at whispering answers to each other. However, unlike in a standard school setting, where this quiet assistance is frowned upon, immersion teachers welcome this hushed translation as a necessary part of the process.

"In learning a second language, there's more brain pathways built," says Li. "The brain is more efficient. Particularly with a tonal language, you're really using the right side. I think the communication is really secured that way, with both sides of the brain." According to Xiaoqiu Xu, who studied second-language acquisition while earning her PhD at Stanford and now works at Pearson Knowledge Technologies in Menlo Park, California, "If you already have learned a second language, it is easier to pick up a third." It also improves your native language skills, she says, though not immediately. "Research shows English lagging behind a little bit in kindergarten, first, and second grades," Xu says. "But immersion students typically pick up and surpass their peers by the end of elementary school."

As an immersion learner, you're also more likely to be a better all-around student because of the brain's improvement in overall executive functioning. So these students—and the adults they become—are better able to manage and control cognitive processes like reasoning, focus, concentration, perception, and working memory. Improving their problem-solving abilities and mental flexibility can lead to improved creativity as well.

All of this is especially true if you learn the language in elementary school before you hit your teens. As a child, your brain is more plastic and the language center is primed and ready for this sort of acquisition work.

While at Stanford, Xu published a paper on a study in which she compared the Mandarin fluency of fourth- and fifth-grade immersion students and AP Chinese high school students in the same school districts. The fourth- and fifth-graders performed equally as well as, and in some cases better than, their high school counterparts.

Xu describes what she refers to as a "critical period" in language acquisition. "If a person learns a second language before puberty—ages 12 to 14—it's more likely that they'll sound like a native speaker."

As a child, the language center is in hyperdrive, but there are great hormonal shifts once puberty hits, in middle school or high school, about the time we typically start learning a second language. The brain and body change their developmental focus to other things.

However, it's not just brain plasticity that makes elementary students better at acquiring a second language; emotional resiliency also plays a role. "Younger students are less aware and afraid of making

mistakes," Xu explains. "Adults are more scared of making mistakes and embarrassing themselves in front of other people. That's a big advantage. Children can learn more quickly given their willingness to take risks."

Hillman and I are drinking coffee and sitting off to the side of the PKS courtyard. The first bell has rung, morning assembly has ended, and the 200-plus students have filed into their various classrooms. We're chatting about all the reasons parents choose immersion schools.

I've been told that for some parents it's about making up for what they feel to be a void in their own lives—that for parents who are ethnically Chinese, but raised in America without any Mandarin, they may feel a cultural loss as a result and they look to right this for their children.

Hillman, not in this category, tells me, "The immersion path is—it's cool. At first I was excited because I realized my child will be able to get a job in another country when they are an adult. But it takes five seconds to get beyond that. And you think, okay, well, there's a cultural component to it, and if you start reading, obviously there are so many brain benefits… As parents we derive self-esteem from watching our kids speak Chinese to people who aren't expecting it. There's nothing that can make you feel like a good parent more than watching your kids play chess and singing a Chinese song at the same time. You feel like the best parent ever."

Li says for her "It's not about whether or not they speak Mandarin for life; it's about the developmental advantage. "Whether they keep their Mandarin, we're not attached to that at all. And they can kind of choose," she says. "But it's just the process of learning that we value so deeply. The bilingual education is really, really good for them."

So good, it turns out, that after a week of meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping in September of this year, President Obama announced the goal of having 1 million students learning Mandarin in K–12 programs by 2020.

This is great, but how will they pull it off?

Two hundred schools are a vast improvement over 19 schools in 2005 , but it's still not enough. Even in San Francisco, a city known for having a decent number of immersion schools, supply does not come close to meeting demand.

Hillman and his wife tried to enroll their oldest son in all seven of the city's public immersion programs through the lottery system. They failed on all fronts. They were not alone: Hillman described a sea of Facebook posts and T-shirts springing up with the frustrating "0 for 7" tagline emblazoned. And the lottery losers can't necessarily afford the $20,000 annual tuition that PKS, an independent school, charges.

Meeting the demand for these foreign-language immersion programs requires not just more schools but also a lot more teachers. But good teachers are hard to find—the parents and directors at these schools

want educators who can essentially do double-duty: speak perfect, native-level Mandarin and be well versed in cutting-edge educational practices.

The problem, of course, is that the teachers are either steeped in a traditional educational style that is rote and memorization based, or they do not speak Mandarin well enough.
Hochschild explains, "There's an interesting cultural contest that exists in terms of what the philosophy of this sort of education is going to be: Between tiger moms, which is the raw, hardcore academics-only style, and the panda mom camp, which is about nourishing the whole kid, supporting music and art, school camping trips, having a well-developed, fully rounded young person."

So, you first have to decide what makes a good teacher. Second, you hire them. And even then, they are hard to keep on staff. According to Drolet, "The U.S. does recognize Mandarin as a critical language, but it doesn't back that up with visa support. Sometimes we feel like we're doing battle just to keep our teachers. We invest an incredible amount in best practices and staff development and all these amazing teaching and instructional techniques, and it's heartbreaking if someone can't continue to get visas to stay and teach with us."

Between the immersion schools and other non-immersion Mandarin courses, there are approximately 200,000 K–12 Mandarin students in the United States today. This means we will need enough new teachers for an additional 800,000 students over the next five years. Carola McGiffert, president of the 100,000 Strong Foundation, is in charge of finding a solution to this 800,000-student problem. "We rely heavily on the generous support of the Chinese government, which sends us hundreds of teachers every year." She acknowledges, however, that this is never going to be enough.

McGiffert has come to realize that you don't have to be fully fluent in a language to be an effective language teacher, which "opens the door for more young Americans who are highly proficient," she says. "It creates opportunities for them to enter the teaching field in Mandarin. Perhaps they're not teaching the most advanced classes. I think that's one way to get a lot of young people right out of college and graduate school to be excited about becoming a teacher and using their Mandarin skills."

Whether we're able to meet the 100,000 Strong Foundation's ambitious goal remains to be seen, but there is no doubt that students will benefit from its attempt. When you visit these schools and talk to the students, you can't help but get the feeling that the next generation will be more open, equal, and accepting than those that have come before. Li agrees: "When we watch movies, there's one Latino kid or one black kid, and when they refer to them, they don't refer to their skin color. They'll say, 'That boy in the green shirt is really funny.' These kids don't mention ethnicity at all."

Hochschild describes it as "a miraculous fusion of different cultures taking place." These students, he says, "are building a new youth culture that is separate from, and perhaps transcends, Chinese and American, black and white, yellow and brown. There's this young hybrid culture. Students are spinning and weaving together different pieces of their various heritages, turning it into this hybrid culture that is it's own new and beautiful thing."

The Guardian

Bilingualism offers 'huge advantages', claims Cambridge University head

Vice-chancellor Leszek Borysiewicz wants education system to allow children to strive to become as bilingual as they can be

- Can we do more to value the languages of immigrants? – open thread
- More on language learning

Leszek Borysiewicz, vice-chancellor of Cambridge University, sees bilingualism is an important asset. Photograph: Felix Clay for the Guardian

Lucy Ward

Arriving at his Cardiff primary school aged five, the future vice-chancellor of Cambridge University had just one English phrase. Coached the previous evening by his Polish emigree parents, young Leszek Borysiewicz quickly tried out "Please can I go to the toilet?", before realising his classmates were only putting up their hands for registration.

At 63, the memory of that initial confusion remains, but so does the recollection of the dedication shown by teachers who taught the young Polish-speaker English, spending extra time after school or simply taking him for a walk and naming objects – grass, tree, stream.

Now, installed in one of the world's most influential academic posts after a career in medical research, Professor Borysiewicz is adamant that full bilingualism such as he acquired, far from being a problem, is an important asset, both for the individuals concerned and for the country where they grow up.

Conversely, he warns, the sharp decline in modern language study in the UK, especially in state schools serving disadvantaged areas, hampers efforts to widen participation in higher education among poorer students. Allowing learning languages to become the preserve of a privileged elite would be "absolutely wrong", the vice-chancellor told the Guardian.

Borysiewicz called for an end to the term "heritage languages" to describe the languages spoken alongside English by migrants to Britain and their descendants.

One in six children in English primary schools do not have English as a first language. "These are real languages: living languages that give people a huge insight into culture and give the children who can speak them additional opportunities.

"Isn't that what education is about – enabling every child to achieve the maximum potential? What I'd love to see is an emphasis that this is an added value that that child has, a talent, and we should aspire to allow other children who may be monolingual to strive to become as bilingual as they possibly can be."

Borysiewicz spoke Polish at home, with grammar reinforced at Saturday school run by volunteers in the Cardiff Polish community, but believes his English had reached the same standard before he reached secondary school age.

His parents, from eastern Poland, had been imprisoned in Siberian camps by the Russians at the start of the war, but after being freed in 1941 trekked through Russia, Iran and Iraq to Egypt, where they joined the British Eighth Army and fought in Italy. They chose to stay in Britain rather than return to communist Poland.

"My parents made very clear from almost day one that they felt that the future for my sister and myself was very much in Britain, and therefore I absolutely think the world of this country and what it stands for and I'm very proud of what Britain has achieved," said Borysiewicz, who describes his identity as Welsh and British, with an "affinity for Poland as the country of my parents' birth".

All the evidence suggested bilingualism gives "huge advantages", Borysiewicz added. "In an international world of tomorrow, I'd love to see more children in Britain having more than one language to be able to fall back on."

From September, primary schools in England will have to teach junior children – aged seven up – a second language, though concerns remain that many are ill-prepared to do so. However, the vice-chancellor said his own experience – speaking only Polish and then learning English from five – indicated that children should start a second language "the earlier the better", beginning in infant school.

Parental preferences and the "unfortunate reality" that many primary schools lacked teachers with language skills would dictate which languages should be taught, he added.

In a report last year, Languages: The State of the Nation, the British Academy found the UK was suffering from a "growing deficit" in language skills just as global demand for them was expanding. Britain is trapped in a "vicious circle of monolingualism" as a weak supply of language skills pushes down demand, said the study, though it suggested the additional languages spoken by ethnic-minority British schoolchildren would be a valuable source of skills if properly developed.

Language skills were needed at all levels of the workforce "and not simply by an internationally mobile elite", added the report.

Borysiewicz's concern that poorer children are losing access to language learning comes amid evidence that more than a quarter of state schools now do not teach lower-level students a language at all in order to give more time for extra literacy and numeracy support.

He said: "If secondary language education just focuses on some schools with greater capacity and facility that could impact on our ability in certain disciplines to continue the challenge of widening participation to many students."

EMB Presentation to

Committee III

March 2014

Update on Early Mandarin Bilingual (EMB) Program

March 2014

Parent Advisory Council
John Norquay Elementary

Purpose

1. Provide Committee with an update on the progress of the program and its successes
2. Current challenges of the program from parents' perspective
3. Sustainability and further development of the program

Program Overview - Classes

- 5 EMB classes – 5 EMB Teachers – 116 Students
  - 1 Kindergarten Class (22 students)
  - 1 Grade One Class (24 students)
  - 1 Grade Two Class (24 students)
  - 1 Grade Two/Three Split Class (22 students)
  - 1 Grade Three Class (24 students)
- 2011 there was intake of 1.5 Kindergarten and 1.5 Grade One intake
- Since then intake has dropped to only one class of Kindergarten students per year

Program Overview – Location

- Norquay is located in the Eastside at 4710 Slocan Street, between East 29th and Kingsway
- About 80% of the EMB students live outside the Norquay catchment
- Farthest distance from school is one family commuting from near UBC

Program Overview – Curriculum

- 50% Mandarin and 50% English Instruction
- Some EMB teacher do half days in each language, some do alternate teaching days in each language
- Mandarin Subjects Taught – Mandarin Arts, Math, Physical Education, Health and Career
- Traditional Chinese and Hanyu Pinyin taught from Kindergarten to Grade 3
- Simplified Chinese and Hanyu Pingyin will be taught from Grade 4 and up

Program Overview - Funding

- EMB funding transferred to Norquay:
  - $25,000 for 2011-12 school year
  - $25,000 for 2012-13 school year
  - $17,000 for 2013-14 school year
- These funds are on top of general funding for all students to help with the development of the program to ensure its sustainability
- Review of accounting of funds in progress

Program Overview - Enrolment

- Students are assessed for strong English language skills for entry to the program – no students are E.L.L.
  - About 90% of families are non-Mandarin speaking
- For Sept 2014 – 173 families applied for 22 spots in the EMB program, of which about 90 were first choice
  - Because of Sibling Priority only 2-4 spots were available
  - Between 169 to 171 families were turned away
- Since program start in Sept 2011, only 4 EMB students have left the program, 3 from change of residence

Program Successes

- Increase in school enrolment due to the program – results in increase funding with many more "bums in seats"
- Phenomenal demand for the program – drawing families back into public education
- EMB activities – Chinatown parade, class plays, cultural field trips, etc

Program Successes Cont'd

- Equipping students for Global Community – this is recognized by parent that their child can "Talk to the World"
- Fundraising for new playground – in part due to EMB parent support

Program Successes Cont'd

- Revitalization of the school community – PAC has become extremely active and has organized free waffle breakfasts 2x a year, Hot Dog/Pizza days, Bingo night and many other community building activities
- Expanded After School Childcare Spaces – almost double to support this district program
- Highly dedicated teachers who care deeply about the program and devote many hours of their own personal time to develop much of their own Mandarin teaching and resource materials for their classes

Program Challenges

- Curriculum development – additional language resource required, support for teachers including Mandarin Language consultant to help establish and review goals of the program
- Classroom materials and sourcing Mandarin resources
- Standards – introduce an international testing standard which will bring credibility to the program and ensure students are on the right track
- Sustainability of the program – need to increase intake at Kindergarten and allow for another intake at Grade 4 (if only 22 students are starting in Kindergarten)

Program Challenges Cont'd

- Expansion of the program – enough demand to add an extra full class at Norquay and to offer the program at another school (or convert Jamieson to an EMB program)
- Continuation of program to secondary school – there was a commitment from the outset of the EMB program that EMB program will continue into high school, but sentiment now has seemed to change and no word on plans for EMB students after Grade 7
  - EMB students entering Grade 8 will be beyond the Mandarin 9/10 and possibly Grade 12 Mandarin levels. High school is only 4 years away for the oldest EMB student

Program Next Steps

Parents are asking the Committee for the following:

- Continued Support and Funding to ensure the program's development, stability and sustainability - including clear accounting of how EMB funds are spent
- Curriculum Development for Mandarin Language Arts including Teacher support for resource materials, assessment tools and access to Language Consultants
- Expansion of the prog. continuing through increasing the intake with either a second class of Kindergarten or K/Gr1 class at Norquay or a second school site
- Start planning for EMB High School options, whether it be developing a mini-school or adding 2-3 Mandarin high school courses at the level of the EMB students

謝謝

'Thank you Committee members for your time, vision and support of this amazing Program.'

Norquay Parent Advisory Council

2

SACY INTIATIVE PACKAGE

VSB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SPECIAL BOARD/COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BUDGET MEETING

14 APRIL 2016

MARY DOWDALL

MANAGER

VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH

YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE AND PREVENTION SERVICES

(SACY)

Good evening Trustees. We recognize that this a difficult time for the board and do appreciate the opportunity to speak to you tonight about the SACY initiative. My name is Mary Dowdall and this is Tina Tsobanis. We are from Vancouver Coastal Health and we are both part of the SACY leadership team. We would like to first acknowledge that we understand that SACY is in the very fortunate position of not losing a position given the additional funding provided by the Ministry of Education. Instead, we are here to advocate to the board to approve the decision to continue funding SACY at the current staffing levels. We also have letters of support from the VPD, parents and youth who have utilized SACY in the past.

As an organization, VCH values the partnership with the VSB and has seen the positive impact that this partnership has had on the lives of youth in the district So far this year, the SACY STEP program has run 26 sessions of the program for 149 students. Our youth stream has provided service to over 14,000 students through classroom education, groups, workshops and community service learning opportunities. Our parent stream has connected with over 1000 parents/caregiver though workshops, capacity cafes and on ton one support. .

We have been committed to ongoing evaluation and the collection of data since the initiation of SACY and we have noticed a decline in our numbers year after year due to the loss of staffing resources over the past few years. The staffing cuts of past years have also resulted in the necessary process of redesign in order to make the work sustainable for staff and effective and meaningful for the youth and families we serve. We are at a critical point with SACY, in that, any more cuts to this program will result in a program that will look dramatically different and will be forced to provide limited service to youth in the district.

Last year VCH applied for and received $5 million in funding from the federal government to develop a Leadership and Resiliency Program (LRP) for youth in the district. This grant was only possible due to the strong base that SACY provided in building the LRP arm of the program. SACY LRP is now running 8 groups in 7 secondary schools and providing direct service to 120 students in the this school year alone. The expansion of the SACY model speaks to the commitment and value VCH places on this work. We know that VSB shares this same perspective but yet are faced with the difficult task of managing the budget and that is why we implore the board of trustees to maintain our staffing levels.

At this time in Vancouver, there has been a proliferation of marijuana dispensaries throughout the city and last year SACY held a forum for parents/caregivers to learn more about the dispensaries, the impacts of marijuana on a developing brain and to build their capacity to have conversations with their young person on how to navigate this challenging landscape. SACY is also seen as a valuable resource for school administrators and staff by providing information about substance use, trends and events such as, 420. At this time in Vancouver, resources need to be expanded in order to support youth facing a

culture of permissive substance use where myths supporting the safe and healthy use of substances is pervasive.

April 11, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Vancouver Police Department, please accept this letter of support for the Vancouver School Board's School Age Children and Youth - Substance Use Prevention Initiative (SACY).

Over the years the VPD has worked closely with staff at SACY in the schools and in the community. With 15 School Liaison Officers throughout Vancouver schools, we are in constant contact with youth and dealing with youth related issues. The Vancouver Police School Liaison Officer program combines education, investigation, law enforcement, counseling, crime prevention and community relations to meet the diverse needs of residents in the school community. One of the many issues our officers are faced with is that of substance use among young people. Whether it is active drug dealing in the schools, drug use, or general questions about drugs, substance use and misuse is one of the most common topics the SLO's are asked to deal with. Our goal is to prevent further substance use with youth who are already using, and intervene and educate others early enough so that we can reduce the likelihood of substance misuse in the future. The realistic and relevant information that is provided by the SACY team to our members and to youth makes this goal possible.

The partnership between SACY and the VPD has enabled our organization to refer young people to SACY in order to provide drug education. We are aware that the SACY team "uses an innovative and comprehensive approach to deliver coordinated prevention and early intervention strategies that emphasize relationships, connectedness, positive youth development, and social and emotional learning." These core values resonate with the work we try to do in the schools. SACY is an invaluable resource and referral source for the VPD. They have proven time and again to be committed to finding real solutions to address youth substance use issues.

We cannot express how important it is to have programs like SACY available to children and youth to help them feel connected to their schools, and to have adult allies and mentors that enable the youth to be "stronger, healthier and better able to live up to their full potential". Our organization is in full support of SACY's efforts to continue with the work that they do in Vancouver schools. The VPD has an excellent working relationship with SACY and hope to continue this partnership for many years to come.

Regards,

Inspector Howard Tran
VPD Youth Services Section

3585 Graveley Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V5K 5J5, Tel. (604) 717-3535 Fax (604) 665-5078

Letter from a youth:

"Hello,

First I wanna say that I am very grateful for all the learning experiences that SACY has provided me and many of the other high school students enrolled in a VSB school. When I first started volunteering I was a timid Grade 9 student who barely even had an idea on what he wanted to be when he grew up. Volunteering with SACY made me see how I could better help my peers who are going through the same stuff as me just by talking to them and offering to listen and it really provided me a platform to discover the voice I didn't know I had. The program provided me with a healthy support network that understood me in a peer-level. I felt comfortable talking to them about things that I couldn't with my parents. I felt like I was heard, not only that, but also that my opinions were valid and had weight.

Being an LGBT teen, I always felt like it was playing the game of life with a little bit of extra difficulty because whenever I met someone new, I would always wonder where I actually "stood" with them and if I would be comfortable enough with them to share my truth. All very intense things when you're a teenager trying to figure things out for yourself. Haha. Having the youth worker from SACY definitely helped me with being more comfortable being myself at school.

Now, after SACY, I learned that I want to continue to be a positive impact to the people around me and that helped me to better understand my goals in life and pursue an education in psychology. Where I can learn more about how the human mind works and using that knowledge not only just to give back to the community in the same way that the folks at SACY did to me. "

Letter from a youth:

"Grade 12 was a busy and also a very productive year for me, but I also wanted time to be away from school work. I got involved in Sacy in the beginning of the year and I feel thats the reason my entire year went by smoothly. I felt really connected to the community when I started volunteering all around. Sacy gave me the courage to speak up in the crowd, when I got the chance to participate in the wonderful Capacity Cafes. Sacy is like a little family when the workers and youth come together we make great memories and interactions. Sacy is a safe house for youth, you feel wanted and safe when you are with everybody else. Sacy is the greatest source I came across through my whole high school career. To me Sacy was the leading path to life. And it shall continue to support youth until infinity."

Grad Eric Hamber

2276 West 3rd Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V6K 1L4

April 12, 2016

Vancouver School Board
1580 West Broadway,
Vancouver BC
V6J 5K8

Dear School Board,

I was saddened and concerned to hear that a youth worker has been cut from the system in the latest budget.

As a parent of a teen, the youth workers have been very helpful and supportive through difficult times, especially the one to one counseling. Parents and teens need this support to continue.

Over the years our family has accessed several youth programs through the Vancouver School Board:

- Our son attended the 3 day STEP program
- We attended parent workshops and the Parents Together support group
- One to one meetings and calls with a counselor
- Our son was referred to the Rock Start climbing program

Being a parent and going through these teen issues is very isolating, it's not something you can easily talk about with your friends and family for there is an inevitable judgment, so you don't know where to turn. We are very grateful to have received non-judgmental and supportive counseling and resources.

We were given new ideas and strategies for parenting. It was a real lifesaver to have someone to call when things felt crazy and out of control. And then for them to listen to our concerns, strategize and help get us connected with programs and services. If we had not had this service available, I'm not sure what we would have done.

I hope the Board will reconsider the cut to this very important service.

Thank you,

Alejandra Aguirre

April 12, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Along my journey as a parent, I remember hearing many horror stories from friends and family related to parenting teenagers. I couldn't really relate to them at the time as my kids were younger. But I remember thinking to myself; surely it can't be that bad. Well, if you are or have been a parent to a teen, you know that all these stories are true and in some cases, much worse. I wished that I had paid closer attention to them then as I might have learned some valuable lessons.

Shortly after entering high school, my oldest child had her first introduction to alcohol at a party. Over the next years, this experimentation escalated to other risky behaviors, including the use of recreational and street drugs. My husband and I were shocked and distressed to discover our daughter's double life. Being a smart and bright individual, she was very clever in keeping these behaviors hidden.

I first learned of SACY through a series of communication workshops that they offered at my daughter's high school. I also met Alexandra Wilson, a district lead of SACY at these workshops. Over the years, I have had to call upon her on numerous occasions for support and assistance. At times of distress, these phone calls were my lifeline when I didn't know where else to

turn and what to do about my daughter. It was reassuring to know that I could call on Alexandra, who would always make time to speak to me and calmly provide me with the guidance that I needed. She is a wealth of information and was able to put me in touch of the appropriate services in the community. Through SACY, I was able to find individual counseling for my daughter as well as counseling for the whole family. Alexandra also connected my daughter with the youth support worker at her school and STEP, a 3-day intensive program at SACY that focuses on issues surrounding alcohol and other drugs as well as harm reduction, decision making and critical thinking. While change does not happen overnight, I know attending STEP has increased my daughter's awareness of her situation, helped her to reflect on her past actions and consider her future actions. The youth worker continues to support my daughter to help her build on her strengths and progress.

It takes a village to raise a child. SACY's close working relationship with the high schools puts them in a unique position to connect directly and effectively with the school counselors, students and families. Connection is prevention. I strongly urge the committee to reconsider its position in the current budget proposal. Each year for the past several years, SACY has lost positions through funding cuts. Losing one more youth worker position will

prevent SACY from delivering the necessary services to all the high schools. Teens today are faced with an increasing amount of stress and peer pressure. We must take on a proactive approach with teens. Early education and intervention are critical. Our family has benefited from SACY in so many ways. Without their support and assistance, I truly believe that our daughter would have continued down the slippery slope.

To whom it may concern,

Eight months ago, at the exact time my teenage son entered High School, I entered the most difficult chapter in my parenting experience to date. The transition to High School heralded manifold changes in virtually every aspect of my son's psyche and in his life - socially, emotionally, physically and even spiritually. This development in my son has affected many dimensions in our family and in our home and has at times brought with it indescribable stress, frustration, panic, confusion and at times, despair.

Through this challenging period, I have felt as if my family is on a ship in a raging ocean with no map, no compass and minimal seafaring skills! This is not a good place to be in. Prior to hearing about SACY, I felt so alone and isolated in my struggle as I attempted to navigate my way through these troubled waters and if it was not for the invaluable telephone support that I have received from a SACY Parent and Family Engagement Worker, I would have risked drowning and would have been less able to help my son who is completely perplexed by the new ocean we are in!

I cannot overstate how much I have valued and continue to value the telephone support; it is absolutely priceless. Having the chance to speak to a skilled SACY Parent and Family Engagement worker who will listen well and attempt to give me tools and encourage me to develop skills to parent well in what are at times, overwhelmingly challenging situations has been a lifeline for me. I appreciate highly that the telephone support provides a context in which to speak confidentially and that there is no judgment served on me! Where else does one find someone who will:
*listen well?
*remain objective?
* keep the conversation confidential?
*reserve judgment of the parent and teenager?

I am struck throughout every single encounter with SACY employees at the depth of understanding they have of teenagers on every level of the teenage phenomenon (!) and also the wisdom with which they speak.

I have also attended three SACY workshops: Building Bridges with Teens, Capacity Cafe and the Adult toolkit/SACY STEP. Each one of these workshops was a valuable opportunity to learn, to understand and to take positive steps on the journey as a parent of a teenager.

Last but ABSOLUTELY by no means least, my son has availed himself of the opportunity to speak to a SACY Youth Support Worker at his school who works from a strength focused perspective. I believe it is an invaluable resource for my son to have the opportunity for him to share in this safe environment with this person. That is a very important element of his own self care as he wrestles with the complexities of his teenage experience. It is so encouraging to know that she focuses on his strengths.

In summary, I honestly don't know how we would be coping as a family at this time without the resources offered through the SACY workers; they are part of our 'survival kit' at this time. The resources offered through the SACY programme are helping me do the very best I can and I am indescribably grateful. I believe it would constitute a tremendous loss to compromise the programmes and resources in any measure.

I hope that my thoughts and experiences will be taken into consideration in the deliberations underway at present.

Sincerely,

Parent

VSB Presentation Regarding Band and Strings Programs

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The new VSB budget just came out. And if I were the teacher, they would receive an "I" for this project. It's clearly inconsiderate, lacking in thought, and incomplete. But, being an "I", they still have the chance to improve before the final grade.

My name is Nellie Sun. I am a grade 9 student who has had the privilege of music education all my life. This is my eleventh year of learning piano and after two years of elementary school band, I am in my second year of high school band. I have seen, first-hand, the positive effects of music education on myself and my peers.

I have come today in hopes of convincing you not to cut the band and strings program. Some of you might think of this as overly ambitious, but the logic is simple when I see how music is incredibly beneficial to students and how crucial accessibility is.

Music offers a plethora of life skills for students. According to studies approved by the Royal Conservatory of Music, music education positively affects the brain. Practicing music builds the left brain, which is responsible for languages. In turn, music students enjoy better speech abilities, concentration skills, and higher test results. The three benefits translates to success in school.

I still remember I practiced a saxophone etude that was highly technical. It was very difficult because of the speed and the agility it requires. I practiced each phrase many times over until I could get it perfect. Music has taught me not to give up, even when faced with tremendous difficulty. Now, instead of running away from all the walls, I learn to persevere until I break them down. Determination is an essential ingredient of life. It's important to teach young students about not giving up.

Furthermore, music increases confidence. When I was young, I was too shy to talk to strangers. But through recitals in front of crowds and band concerts in elementary school, I left self-doubt behind. I can now ad lib a solo, something I couldn't have dreamed of years prior. And today, I'm standing in front of you, speaking. Music gave me that courage.

And there are a lot of music students with the same stories. These essential skills are effectively taught and mastered through music education. Better yet, in elementary levels, it has an earlier effect on the student's learning progress. Students in the future should definitely have the right to continue experiencing these benefits.

It's no secret that instruments and music lessons are expensive. Instrument cost varies from $400-$5000 depending on the choice. We recognize the payment is

highly difficult for families with financial hardship. Most times, the student will have to forfeit the chance for a music education. Because we don't want to sacrifice the learning of the student, we have libraries of instruments and grants to support these families. But once we remove the program, accessibility becomes a big issue for these students. They no longer have the opportunity to establish a basic foundation of music in the elementary level. That's not fair. And because we believe in opportunities for everyone, the cut is fundamentally wrong.

At the end of the day, music education is very important. And we need more funding, not more cuts. We realize the VSB has a shortfall of funds. But we don't think sacrificing our student's learning is acceptable. And so, the VSB might consider alternative options like the ones proposed by Vancouver School Music Teacher's Association. They are willing to work with you in order to hash out details. We encourage the VSB to talk with the provincial government. To ask for more funds. To DEMAND a better future for our students. And if the VSB speak up, we, the students and parents will stand by you, we will speak with you. But quit preying on young children because that's not ok.

I have my own story of how music benefitted my life. Of how music makes me happy. As do many people in this room.

You hold the key to writing more of these stories of music. Of learning. Of progress.

Let's work together, not against each other, for better education.

Thank you.

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Submission to VSB at Public Consultations on Budget 2016/17

April 14, 2016

Jennifer Stewart on behalf of Families Against Cuts to Education

There is a province-wide problem with education funding. Districts all over BC are facing budget shortfalls yet again this year; some will be able to make up the difference with one-time funding, but most are making cuts to programs, services, and even entire schools.

The VSB's shortfall is notable for its size, which may result from the district's unique demographic challenges in combination with previous decisions regarding one-time funding solutions. But it is far from unique in its struggle to balance its budget and this is because the funding allocated to the districts by the province is not sufficient to meet costs. This has been acknowledged by MLAs from both sides of the Legislature who are members of the Select Standing Committee for Government and Finance. Last November, they unanimously concluded that

> Current funding levels and assistance are inadequate, which is causing significant operational and program delivery problems in schools throughout B.C.

They made three recommendations:

> First, the Committee recommends that government ensure sufficient and timely capital funding to provide for facility improvements, seismic upgrades and also to facilitate the building of new schools in areas that are struggling to cope with increasing student numbers. The Committee ascertains that additional funding is necessary to ensure the provision of quality public education and to properly meet the increased costs that schools are currently facing.
>
> Finally, the Committee recommends a review of the Ministry of Education funding formula relating to programs, services and administrative staffing compensation, to ensure this sector is properly supported. By properly investing in this sector, the Committee suggests that economic and community goals have a better chance of being realized.

This third recommendation gets to the heart of the matter: the current funding model, based on a per-pupil amount, is not working. The per-pupil model is not conducive to a system that provides consistent, reliably high-quality education across the province. The per-pupil model punishes communities that, for whatever reason, see a decrease

in student population. Shouldn't kids in those communities be able to access the same quality of education as those in growing communities?

The VSB has been active in advocating for increased funding, but FACE urges this board to also advocate for a change to how that funding is calculated. The actual costs of providing quality public education need to be taken into account. The current model is not working, and kids across BC are paying the price.

On our website, as part of our **#bcedinred** campaign with the Parent Advocacy Network, we have a growing list of districts facing shortfalls. Join us in wearing red on the day the provincial budget is passed, as a visual statement that while BC's budget may be in the black, public education is in the red.

Families Against Cuts to Education
facebc.wordpress.com
facebc.vancouver@gmail.com

Submission to VSB at Public Consultations on Budget 2016/17

April 14, 2016

Jennifer Stewart, on behalf of Simon Fraser Elementary PAC

My son is seven years old and attends Simon Fraser Elementary. It is a small school that is bursting at the seams; this year it is 140% full and in September it will be 150% full. There is an in-catchment lottery for kindergarten spaces; for the upcoming year, 90 families applied for 50 spots.

We have two portables with a third coming, eating up the open space around the school. What used to be a computer room is now an under-sized kindergarten classroom, the computers take up half the library, and what was previously the art room is now the grade seven classroom. There is not enough room in the gym for all the kids to eat lunch, so some divisions eat in their classrooms, leading to less-than-sanitary conditions. The therapy room is essentially a multi-purpose room. There is no quiet space for the many children who need it: including low and high incidence, over 15% of our kids have special needs.

At our PAC meeting on Tuesday we discussed these proposed cuts and all the parents in the room were horrified. Our kids already do without so much, and now they will have less: the supply budget is frozen, the school flex budget is being cut, the funds it already had are being appropriated, we may lose clerical staff and some library time (we already only have a librarian 2.5 days/week). In addition, maintenance is being cut so all of this over-crowding is going to occur in more run-down conditions, with greater risk of illness and adverse reactions to allergen cross-contamination due to custodial cuts. We are also concerned about the cuts that affect other students across the district, and in particular those that hit the most vulnerable learners the hardest. Society benefits when children have the tools to succeed.

We desperately need a school to be built in Olympic Village, to solve the over-crowding. Until that happens, we should at least be able to expect that our kids' school experience will still be as good as possible. That is not going to happen with these types of cuts. My daughter is only three years old: how bad will the situation be at the school when she starts kindergarten? Our kids deserve better.

April 2016

Committee Budget Meeting Presentation in Brief:

Needed:

1. Increased intake with **two** K-level EMB classes per year
2. The possibility of **late-entry** for students proficient in English who pass a Mandarin test. (To fill the odd vacant spot in grades 4 & up)
3. **Funding to begin** the high-school curriculum planning **NOW**. (French is well-established and receives federal funding but Mandarin is new and doesn't receive the same federal support, we need it to come from you!!)
4. Money **not** to be **cut** to **specialty Programs** but to be saved by reorganizing schools to **keep every classroom in use and at full capacity**. (Consolidating students from 4 unfilled schools into 3 filled schools saves 750,000 just in facility costs, not to mention staffing.)
5. Raised **expectations** with regards to language proficiency by grade 12 for the EMB Program (previously set at B1 in the European framework, should be **bumped to B2** judging by the excellent progress our children are making so far). This is not just a token Program that adds to Norquay Elementary's portfolio, it's effective!!

Thank you!!

Cala Cordella

ccordella@stgeorges.bc.ca

caladyck@hotmail.com

604-368-7235

你们好，我叫康兰。我三年前搬回温哥华了。都是因为希望给自己的儿女机会学中文。

I took French immersion for my elementary years only, and as a result I lost it all. BUT, I am fluent in Mandarin. It took me years of university and a long stay in Taiwan but it's been worth it. Since then every employer I have had has considered my application over others of similar caliber due to my Mandarin skills. To give my children this advantage by giving them a full 12 years of a Mandarin head start is of inestimable value.

I'm here as a parent concerned about the impact of budget concerns on the future of unique Programs like the Early Mandarin Bilingual Program. Practically speaking I think of budgeting this way: it doesn't make sense for a restaurant to reduce the availability of it's most popular dishes. On the contrary, restaurants study which of their dishes are most popular and use them for inspiration to create more attractive dishes. The cost of planning a dish is more than compensated for with the higher influx of customers and it doesn't necessarily cost more to offer new dish.

I know VSB is not a restaurant and its' students are not customers but the same logic applies. VSB attracts people from other districts BECAUSE OF its' variety in unique Programs. Others like me have the option to send their children to the private schools they work for but haven't taken advantage of this option BECAUSE OF the EMB Program. It is an excellent example of the variety that attracts people to VSB. Hearing of EMB alone was enough to get me to move from Italy back to my hometown Vancouver. My children were born in Italy where I had been for 10 years when I heard about the EMB Program through an EMB parent. It was a HUGE draw, it made me realize that to give my children the most options to ensure they not only survived their school years but thrived I'd need to come home to Vancouver. Programs like these should be EXPANDING, not remaining stagnant. If any money needs to be saved it should come from consolidating schools to keep every classroom occupied and reduce admin costs in running schools at less than capacity, we should not be stealing from specialty Programs. I am convinced of VSB's commitment to EMB based on past communication but I'm here to remind VSB of that commitment and the need to set aside funding NOW for curriculum planning for grades 8-12. I propose that the 0.40 FTE Modern Languages Teacher Mentor funding go towards planning for EMB at the high school level and that we raise the bar so-to-speak by aiming for B2 by the end of high school instead of B1. This Program is not just run as a token Program to make Norquay look good, it really works!

Related to the request to fund high school planning is the need to expand the Program at the Elementary school level to keep classes filled to maximum capacity in the later elementary years and on into high school. Currently there is an intake of 1 class per year in EMB, with a rough average of 150 students on the waitlist each year (with as few as 2 non-sibling-allotted spaces per year!!). We should be taking AT LEAST 2 classes per year. There is virtually NO EXTRA cost in running an EMB classroom compared to a regular classroom (going back to the restaurant comparison -it's just the ingredients that change - the cost stays the same). We'd attract more students from other districts, and there are fewer drop-outs in EMB than in VSB French immersion programs so we'd KEEP our newly-acquired students too! With regards to any spots that do become available, parents are willing to cooperate with VSB to fill them by introducing late-entry EMB in grades 4-7. There are multiple language schools in Vancouver that offer after-school Mandarin classes and my fellow EMB supporters have already mentioned the numbers at just one of the local college programs. We would be willing to have students who pass an English proficiency test and have some Mandarin skills join the Program whenever we could fit them in.

Having made the restaurant comparison I'd like to point out now that VSB has many more noble motivations than just keeping the number of customers high. Through its' constant support of EMB from the very beginning VSB has demonstrated its' interest in the QUALITY and PRACTICALITY of our children's instruction, ensuring that they get the best out of their education and reach adulthood ready to face an international job market. Thank you for your support and congratulate you on this amazing program!

Good evening Chairmen Lombardi, VSB trustees, parents and fellow students,

I am a grade six student here tonight to speak on behalf of Kerrisdale Elementary school students who have signed this petition.

We understand that that in order to save money some schools must be closed and some programs must be cut. However, please try look at things through the eyes of a student and consider how your decision will affect us. I am here specifically to request that our wonderful library and teacher-librarian stays the way it currently is, which is open full time. Also, for you to save the band program . The fact is, the students and I want *everything* to stay the same. Even though this may be difficult we all believe this IS possible.

Why do we want the library and T.L. teacher-librarian to be available full time? First of all, our library is one of <u>the</u> most popular place in the entire school. There is a great-computer working area to discover fascinating facts online and work on projects, some tables for homework and of course who wouldn't just love the books! The library is a calm place that cheers **<u>everyone</u>** up and teaches **<u>everyone</u>** interesting information in a fun and efficient way! We would also like you to consider where us, students, would study and learn interesting facts if there isn't a situated destination of peace and quiet for these kind of self learning? I would like to mention that our librarian Mrs. Michele Farquharson is the one and only **best** teacher librarian **<u>possible</u>**. She is kind, caring, gentle, open minded, full of marvelous ideas and is an AWARD WINNING ~~librarian~~ TL. She is a rare angel from heaven who deserves it all for her and **our** library. It would be a travesty to have to cut the library and librarians time.

Wait! There's more! Being members of the band we **FOR SURE** want you to save the band program. This past year and the year before we have

enjoyed **so much** being part of the band and playing together as a ensemble. We absolutely **can** say getting up early for each and every practice was **completely** worth it! We badly want to be able to continue our wind instruments in an ensemble next year *and* allow others to have our privileges. Our band teacher Mrs. Marlis Macaulay is *very* nice, talented in music *and* teaching. The music that we produce make us glow and the music that others hear us play make them delighted. Help keep everyone smiling!

Please think it through carefully, if you cut back our library and librarian's open time **not only** will the people who have signed this petition not be as happy and bright but **others** too *including* our amazing ~~librarian~~ TL Mrs.Farqasion. If you let off the band program our school will be utterly low-key. Make a decision you'll ***never*** regret! KEEP OUR LIBRARY OPEN FULL TIME AND KEEP OUR BAND PROGRAMS!

Thank you for listening to our concerns,

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Elizabeth Sue,
Grade 6 student, Kerrisdale elementary school, Vancouver

April 14, 2016

Good evening Chairman Lombardi, VSB Trustees, Committee members, fellow parents and students:

Some Pigs are More Equal Than Others (1984)– Some Students are More Equal Than Others (2016)

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Eileen Sue and I am here to speak on behalf of the "average student" - not the outstanding straight A's, not the superior athletically skilled ones, not the ELL's, not the special needs, not the gifted, not the international students but the ordinary students. The ones who are not here tonight to advocate for themselves because they don't know that they should or they don't know how to. They are overlooked because they are 'average' – they are without a voice.

These children also are our future. Perhaps they aren't the most academically gifted, the most verbal, the most outstanding. But what they do share is a common love for their band music programs. They may not be winners at the Kiwanis music festival, but they enjoy learning and playing music together and this greatly enriches their educational experience. As per the Budget documents, VSB Senior Management labels it the "optional band and strings program", ostensibly in preparation for its axing. I vehemently disagree with this term "optional" as **music should be a core** part of the elementary educational program.

You've already heard from my daughter about the positive influence the band program has in her life. Various groups over the years as well as on the past two evenings have advocated on the vital importance of music for a well-rounded education, not to mention a balanced society. I will not reiterate those facts but rather, give some suggestions.

The current proposal is to chop the music program for "savings" of $396K and to slash 23 high school teachers.

Where is the money to pay for all this? Elementary music students already pay $50/year **user fee.**

For argument's sake, let's look at the international student program:

Currently there are 1700 students paying $13K/year tuition for total $22.1 million gross revenue. Page 43 of **2016-2017 Preliminary Budget Proposals Report March 31 2016 proposes a** $111,448/year counsellor, ostensibly to "provide emotional support for these students who don't have direct parent support."

pg. 43: It is important that adequate support is provided for these students, many of whom live in Canada without direct parental emotional support. It is therefore requested that the Board approve the addition of one continuing counsellor position, which would be funded on an ongoing basis by the proposed enrolment increase. This position would be a district level counsellor who would provide direct support to students.

Two suggestions to raise money through the international student program.

1. Implement a user pay for "counselling fee" to fund this extra counsellor. Just like our students pay $50/year user fee for their band and strings program, international students could pay mandatory $100 user fee for counselling services. An extra $100 raises $180,000 right there. Or $188, a nice "lucky"

number: $338.4K – wow, this is not too far from $396K needed to save the music programs!

2. Raise the tuition to $15000/year from the current $13K/year. This is still a bargain considering that private schools are $19000+, if the child can even get in.

Extra $2000 X 1800 students = $3,600,000 extra dollars for OUR children

Children helping other children, only in this case, it's our children in need.

This exercise is not meant to demean our international students but rather to illustrate that money can be made available. Otherwise, by the VSB's and the government's actions, we are giving our students the message that "some students are more equal than others". Already, international student:teacher ratios are 1:22; high school students are expected to cope with 1:30+.

reference: http://vsta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Budget-Recommendations.pdf

K-12 Teaching Allocation International Education According to the VSB's own projections, an additional 50 FTE international students are anticipated for 2015/16. Despite this projected increase, however, the preliminary budget proposes a reduction of 7.73 FTE teachers. To decrease teaching time by altering the formula to a ratio of 22 students: 1.0 FTE will invariably result in even fewer supports for the district's most isolated students. Furthermore, any reduction in service has the potential to eventually lead to international families considering registering in districts that offer superior levels of service. This proposal can best be characterized as penny wise but pound foolish. The VSTA recommends that the ratio of 20 international students: 1.0 FTE be retained

BC has a world class educational system that the rest of the world recognizes and covets. The government and school boards have decided to monetize BC education and sell it for cheap. Instead of cutting back, the money can be found.

Our children should have not suffer the incremental destruction of their Canadian taxpayer funded education. Every spring, we should not have to be pitting parent against parent, student against student as we all vie for your attention as to which program is most worthy to survive, auditioning as if we are contestants on American Idol. **All** students and **all** programs are equally important. But the actions of cutting music programs to bare bones by eliminating the elementary band and strings program gives a loud and clear message of "some students are more equal than others".

In the end, I'm not fussed about how the elementary school band and music programs are saved. I am here tonight to advocate on behalf of the "average Canadian student" who enjoys this **essential CORE** program which results in an enthusiastic engaged pupil, our future leaders and citizens of society.

Do not cut this valuable program – it isn't "optional", it's CORE.

Are some students more equal than others?

Thanks for your time and attention,

Eileen Sue

My name is Sandra Bell and I am representing the Queen Alexandra Elementary School PAC.

Queen Alexandra is a F.A.M.I.L.Y. school. That is Fine Arts Multicultural Integrated Learning for Youth. We are a Tier 1 school with a population of 195 students. The school community is very representative of the city of Vancouver; students attend our school from all over the world. 40% of our students are English Language Learners, 29% of our students have been identified as having Special Educational Needs and 33% of our students are Aboriginal.

The Queen Alexandra PAC recognizes that these budget proposals will affect all students in the district and we object to these proposals. Since there is not enough time for me to discuss each of these proposals today, I would like to highlight those proposals which directly affect Queen Alexandra Elementary and thereby affect some of the district's most vulnerable students. Those proposals are: E 12.5 Teacher-Librarian Teacher Mentor, E 12.9 Literacy/Early Intervention Teacher Consultant, E 17 Enhanced Services Literacy Teachers, and E 18 Special Education Support Entitlements.

We are pleased to see that the adjustments to Budget Proposals will reduce the number of Enhanced Services Literacy Teachers removed from 12.0 FTE to 4.0 FTE and the number of SSAs removed from 12.0 FTE to 5.0 FTE; however, we feel that **none** of these positions should be removed.

Although the reduction in the number of SSAs to be removed will increase the district's ability to meet the needs of students with Ministry Designations, it does not take into consideration the large number of students who are clearly in need of support yet have no Ministry Designation. This may be due to the fact that they are new to the province, or most likely that they are waiting for an assessment which has a minimum waitlist of 18 months. Are we willing to let these children who desperately need support to fall through the cracks?

We, at Queen Alexandra feel that Literacy should be of utmost importance. It is the basic foundation for all learning and every child's fundamental right. Karen Samra, the Enhanced Services Literacy Teacher,

who works with the most vulnerable students at Queen Alexandra, currently works with 30 students 4 – 5 days per week.

My 15 year old daughter, who is currently enrolled in the Athena Arts Program at Windermere Secondary School, is an example of a student who received Literacy Support during her early years of elementary school. She is now an avid reader and enthusiastic writer. Let me tell you about a book she recently recommended to me. Legend by Marie Lu is the story of America in the year 2056 where children are required to take a series of tests called Trials on their 10th birthday. The vulnerable children from the poor sectors usually fail or do poorly on their Trials. The children who fail are secretly killed by the government and the children who do poorly are denied further education and must go to work in the worst jobs. The privileged children who do well gain admittance to high school and university and eventually gain the best jobs. Although this is a fictional story, it may very well be the future we are looking at if cuts are made to Literacy Teachers who help our most vulnerable student.

Thank you for your time today. I empathize with the daunting task set before you in trying to balance a budget without sufficient funding from the Provincial Government. Queen Alexandra PAC is committed to helping all students receive quality public education and as such we will rewrite this presentation as a letter to the Ministry of Education.

KAMP
KABABAYAN ACADEMIC
MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Email: info@kamp.education
Web: www.kamp.education

TO: Vancouver Board of Education/Committee of the Whole Meeting
FROM: Rene-John Nicolas, Kababayan Academic Mentorship Program
DATE: April 14, 2016

Re: 2016/2017 Proposed Budget Cuts and Multicultural Liaison Workers

Background

Thank you to the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Coast Salish peoples for access to this territory and thank you to the Vancouver Board of Education for the opportunity to address you today. I want to preface my submissions by noting the difficult position you find yourselves in, and the fact that this difficulty is directly attributable to the failure of the provincial government to provide adequate funding to our public education system.

The topic of my submissions is the Multicultural Liaison Worker ("MCLW") Program. As you know, the Preliminary Budget Proposals (and here I'm specifically referring to page 64 of Attachment A) calls for cuts to 2.0 FTE MCLW positions. Specifically:

- 1.0 FTE from South Asian MCLWs;
- 0.5 FTE from Vietnamese MCLWs; and
- 0.5 FTE from Korean MCLWs.

Overall Position

While the Board faces difficult decisions with respect to many of the important programs it offers, it is my view that the proposed cuts to the MCLW Program should not be undertaken.

The Importance of MCLWs

MCLWs provide an incredibly valuable service to some of the most vulnerable students in the public education system. Those students are new immigrants from countries across the globe, refugees whose families have chosen to rebuild their lives here in this city and international students who seek to learn English and are increasingly an important source of much needed funding. It is the MCLWs that provide the first - and I would argue most ongoing - assistance to these vulnerable students in bridging the often enormous cultural and linguistic divide that separates them from genuine integration into our public education system.

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MCLWs and KAMP

I have had the opportunity to experience the value of the work done by MCLWs *first hand* through the Kababayan Academic Mentorship Program (or KAMP for short). KAMP is a community based academic mentorship program that pairs Filipino university students with newly-arrived Filipino students at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary for weekly academic and life-skills mentoring.

The program is now in its 8th year of operation. It was MCLW named Joy Jose that took the initiative to reach out to her students' cultural community and marshalled the resources necessary to provide much needed after-school programming for these students. It was also Joy who without exception supervises weekly mentoring sessions every Friday afternoon.

One story about KAMP that I would like to share with you is that of a former mentee named Gen. Gen was one of KAMP's first mentees. For the first year or so at KAMP we could barely get two words out of her. With time and with the encouragement of her "Tita" Joy, Gen blossomed into a confident student leader. Beyond high school, I'm proud to report that Gen maintained a connection with the network of mentors she encountered through KAMP. With their continued guidance, she is pursuing a marketing degree funded by a part-time job she obtained, again, through the KAMP network.

If you'll allow me to digress for a moment, you'll notice that I referred to Joy as "Tita". That is what she is known to her students and the Filipino community. "Tita" is a kinship term in the Tagalog language which denotes a female elder, something akin to an aunt and this is true with the other cultural groups too. It accounts for the importance of the relationship that develops between MCLWs and their students.

Back to my main point, I have seen how a MCLW-driven project like KAMP makes a real impact on the educational outcomes of newly arrived Filipino youth. But the point is this: KAMP does not exist and cannot continue without the dedicated work of an MCLW like Joy. The other point I wish to make is that for every Gen, there are multiple students who continue to find it difficult to navigate the new system they find themselves in. That is why we need to not only maintain, but increase the current staffing levels for MCLWs.

What is truly amazing though is that KAMP is a side-project for Joy. The focus of her efforts, as is the case with all MCLWs, are direct interventions with students and their families. Whether it is:

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Web: www.kamp.education

- checking up on a student who did not show up for class, or dealing with academic or behavioral issues in school

- working with teachers, counselors and administrators in putting supports in place, finding appropriate programs in a culturally- sensitive classroom arrangements for students, or

- a home visit with a parent who cannot make school hours because they are working 3 different jobs to make ends meet.

It is these incredibly important direct interventions, and the additional MCLW-spearheaded projects like KAMP, which allow new immigrant, refugee and international students to bridge any cultural or linguistic barriers in genuinely accessing our public education system.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to thank the Board for hearing me out today. I wish you courage and fortitude in the difficult days to come with this budget process. It is my hope that you will consider my submissions and decide against cutting sorely needed MCLW positions.

DATE: Thursday, April 14, 2016

TO: Vancouver Board of Education, Board/ Committee of the Whole Meeting

FROM: Sylvia Helmer, retired teacher, ELL support specialist, consultant and manager for Vancouver Board of Education.

TOPIC: Proposed cut of Multicultural Liaison Worker FTEs

Thank you to the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Coast Salish peoples for access to this territory and thank you to the Vancouver Board of Education for allowing me time to speak against the proposed cuts to the Multicultural Liaison Workers.

Vancouver as a school district is suffering from declining enrolment - not to mention lack of adequate provincial funding - but immigrants, refugees and international students from around the world continue to arrive – daily. The Multicultural Liaison Workers – affectionately know as the Multis – are the linguistic and cultural bridges between and among these students, their parents and teachers, as well as the schools and the communities in which they live. The Multis represent a level of support, the demand for which has not waned over the years and, additionally, has become more complex and demanding than ever.

Everyone calls on the Multis for help. Teachers and administrators call on them to reach out to families when there are concerns that range from attendance to more serious learning challenges. The Multis are also the bridge that helps to link short term and long-term objectives the school has for the students with the goals and aspirations of parents and the students themselves.

As a former teacher, I availed myself of their support on numerous occasions. Without fail they offered timely assistance, provided both linguistic and cultural interpretation and supported my efforts to help the learners succeed. I was often left in awe of their commitment and their dedication, not to mention their ability to work with parents in a way I could not begin to emulate.

Yes, I worked long hours too, but I did not have to negotiate difficult early morning or late night conversations with parents. Nor did I have to try to be in several places at once as each family wanted to have 'their' Multi present for parent-teacher conferences. I also did not have to negotiate the sometimes-critical spaces between words – where what is not said can be as important to understanding and then resolving issues as the words that are spoken. Understanding how to approach parents in a culturally appropriate way so that everyone feels heard and valued is a priceless asset the Multis bring to their roles in our schools.

Parents understand that the Multis are their advocates on behalf of their children. Not understanding the very different school system and its expectations, parents seek their support to enable them to help their children succeed at school, not to mention how they as parents might best help their children be successful in their new learning contexts. The cultural and linguistic barriers that cause stress for the learners also create challenges for the parents. Unfortunately, parent stressors impact the children in every aspect of their development and schooling, so that timely intervention can be a huge factor in determining their failure or success in education in a new country.

The Multis deal with issues that affect all learners in every cultural group they represent and have, especially in more recent times, also been called upon to help with cultural groups for whom there

are no official advocates. Communication with the schools about a range of issues – academic, behavioural, psychological - requires a sometimes quite steep learning curve for both parents and their children, all of this in the midst of simply trying to adjust to their new home, language, culture and community. Enter the Multis to help build the bridges for these families, our future citizens.

In summary my point is that the Multis are the frontline workers where huge numbers of our students are concerned. They play a vital role and constitute a resource that VBE, administrators and teachers – not to mention parents and students - cannot do without and cannot allow to be eroded further. If I had a few hours, I could illustrate both the challenges they have faced and the exemplars of artfully crafted resolutions they have fashioned. Instead I am asking you to reconsider the 2 FTE cuts to the Multicultural Workers because:

- The work of the Multis in a diverse and multicultural district such as Vancouver is invaluable. Moreover, the group is already spread far too thinly given the demand for their support services.
- The Multis are already reaching out to additional culture/linguistic groups of learners and their communities. If there are cuts, who will get dropped off the 'we need help, please' list? Consider, also trying to meet the current level of needs across a district this size, solo. It is simply untenable.
- Cultural issues require special consideration when it comes to optimal communication. It is simply a fact that for some immigrant and refugee groups, concerns and challenges will not be resolved if there is no opportunity to confer with someone of the same gender as the person seeking support. Whether we agree with such 'gender-bias' or not, it is a fact that needs to be accommodated, particularly in the early stages of cultural adjustment to Canada. It is how we achieve equity of access for all. I fear that not having someone who truly understands these cultural complexities is sure to impact the learners whose families are not able to get the support they need.

I am proud to be living in a multicultural country and proud that VBE is a diverse and multicultural school district. I am proud of having worked and been part of the district that realized the potential of Multicultural Workers and took steps to ensure such a support program was in place long before anything like it appeared anywhere else in BC. I am hopeful that this small reminder of the value of and integral part that the Multis play in working with thousands of learners, their families and the teachers who teach them, will inspire you to rescind the proposed cuts to their numbers.

Thank you.

Sylvia Helmer

Sylvia Helmer

Good evening VSB Trustees, Staff and Stakeholders,

My name is Fiona Shaw, and my name is Corine Willems, and tonight we are here representing our Tyee Education Advocacy Committee, which is a sub-committee of Tyee Elementary PAC. Our committee of concerned parents formed in October 2014 with the goals of working together to come up with solutions for a school with limited resources as well as the intention of motivating parents to increase their awareness around public education.

Hearing the speakers before us tonight, and the two nights prior to this, has prompted us to do an informal poll of our audience and our Committee-of-the-Whole.

We would like to know, by show of hands:
-How many of you went to public school in BC, or have/have had a child in public school?

-How many of you learned a musical instrument or had some form of music education, in a public school in BC? Or have a child that has learned a musical instrument?

-How many people here tonight, have a good memory of spending time in your school library? Maybe the librarian helped you find a book, read you a story, or helped you research a project?

-How many of you benefited from support from a non-enrolling teacher (someone other than the classroom teacher) in your elementary or high school career? (eg. Reading support, talking to a counselor, language support, career advisor, or enrichment?)

Look how many people benefited from these programs and services, the very ones we are talking about denying our future Vancouver students.

We urge you all to think about what makes your school experience RICH and beneficial? It's a richness that every kid in Vancouver, and in BC deserves.

Our Education Advocacy Committee is hugely concerned about the $24.2 million dollar budget shortfall and subsequent cuts proposed by the Vancouver School Board. These proposed cuts will have significant impact to ALL children across this district, now and for years to come.

We would like to state very clearly, that we believe these cuts being proposed are of direct result of the **systemic under funding from our Provincial Government**.

We believe that the Board should not stand for doing this dirty work for the Provincial Government. We would like you to vote NO on this budget.

Please honour the school experiences that you had, that we had, and that all of the children in Vancouver deserve in the future. They deserve better than this budget.

PRESENTATION TO THE VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD

BY THE GIFTED LEARNING DISABLED (GLD) ADVOCACY GROUP

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the Gifted Learning Disabled Advocacy Group, and myself.

We appreciate the difficult choices that are facing the School Board to resolve the budget issues and don't envy you your task.

However, the cuts that are envisioned to the Gifted Learning Disabled (GLD) Programmes are short sighted and are destined to cause lasting harm to the programmes.

GLD students are those where:

- Outstanding gifts or talent and learning disability are both present, making achievement difficult.
- Discrepancy between cognitive ability and achievement based on some processing problem.
- May present with inconsistency or discrepancies in the academic performance.

Simplistically, a GLD student's ability to process information is not commensurate with his or her intelligence or talent. Such a discrepancy creates frustration, anxiety and doubts about one's abilities. Image if you had injured your hand and could no longer write with the speed that you once did or as fast as you think. You would inevitably feel frustrated at the short term problem. For the GLD students that discrepancy is a permanent situation.

Such frustrations often leads to behavioural issues particularly when, as is all too common, such a disability has not been diagnosed. Those behavioural problems are often not understood by the school as the disability is not identified.

My own son is a GLD student at Prince of Wales. His frustration and anxiety about his not being able to doing things that he thought he should be able to because of his intelligence created numerous behavioural problems. He went through 7 different elementary schools between Kindergarten and Grade 7. It was not until he was properly diagnosed and entered the GOLD Programme at Prince of Wales in Grade 8 that his issues became more manageable for him. He has been in the programme for 3 years which is a personal record for him at one school and he is thriving. I prefer not to think what would have happened to him without the benefit of the GOLD Programme.

Currently the VSB has several programmes for GLD students. They include Challenge Centres, Mentorship, Seminars and last but not least the GOLD programme itself. The GOLD programme is offered at Prince of Wales and David Thompson.

The original budget cut all but the GOLD programme. The current proposal includes the elimination of the 0.8 Gifted Teacher Mentor and the 0.3 psychologist which is all the programme is allotted. In the end, only the Challenge Centres are saved.

Obviously, in order for GLD students to be properly serviced they must first be identified. That identification process can be difficult to the untrained as the behavioural problems that often manifest themselves are attributed to other causes rather than the boredom, frustration and anxiety they experience because of their intelligence and their disability.

The VSB website emphasizes that at the elementary school level services begin at the school. However, those services can only be provided to those who are GLD if they are identified. The District already has problems identifying such students and the cuts that the school board envisions will make the identification of GLD students that much more difficult.

It is the task of the Gifted Teacher Mentor to assist teachers within the district to identify the Gifted and the GLD students. Without that position, teachers won't be trained and will not have that resource to go to. It is also her job to inform teachers and parents about the GOLD programme. Inevitably students will fall through the cracks.

Last year the position was 0.80 FTE. The position was not filled until November so there has not even been a full year of 80% of a person's time. The end result is the continuing problem with identification of GLD students. For example, there is one school in Vancouver of over 550 students who last year identified no students as gifted or GLD. That is a statistical impossibility and demonstrates the problem.

Most of the students in the GOLD programme come from the west side. Over 80% of the students are from west of Main Street. Obviously the actual number of GLD students in the District are not geographically divided in the same manner. There are a number of elementary schools, mostly on the east side, that have not referred any students to the GOLD programmes in the last number of years. That can only be because of a lack of information about the programme.

Without the Gifted Teacher Mentor such anomalies will not be identified, no corrective actions can be taken, and those students at those schools who qualify and need the assistance will suffer.

This year, which in this case means since November, the Gifted Teacher Mentor has done ten school presentations to staff, nine school based team meetings and eleven student consultations on top of the regular work that she does. Without that position, who will do the school outreach, educate the teachers about gifted and GLD students, provide accommodation strategies at the elementary level and guide parents to the GOLD programme to name just a few of the position's responsibilities?

Obviously getting rid of the Gifted Teacher Mentor will stop that work from happening and exacerbate the problem.

A valuable part of the Gifted Learning Programme is mentorship. That programme allows volunteers to connect with students in their particular area of interest. In essence, for the price of a coordinator for that programme, you are getting 60 "teachers" of a broad range of subject matters. The person in charge of arranging the mentorship programme is being cut in the current proposal.

The Challenge Programme appears to have been saved which is a welcome development. However, the nature of the programme is such that the students' involvement in the challenge centres is short term and it does not provide any permanent assistance to the gifted student, or more particularly, to the GLD students. The latter are often excluded from the Challenge Programme because of behavioural issues.

There are currently approximately 740 students involved in challenge, mentorship or seminars and there is a waiting list of 346 students. This means that one in every three students who need the services isn't getting them.

It is well known that getting Psych-Ed testing through the VSB can take as long as several years. Cutting 0.3 of the psychologist may not seem like much of a cut but it will only prolong the waiting list for those who cannot afford to have the test done privately. Two-thirds of the students currently in GOLD had their Psych-ED testing done privately and they are not cheap. This cut will only exacerbate the situation for those who do not have the resources to pay for the testing privately.

The reality is, if you don't allow for the students to be identified the programmes will starve and needy students will not be serviced. By cutting positions you have, and particularly, the Gifted Teacher Mentor – which is not even a full-time position - you will cause the system to fail. It won't matter to my son as he will graduate in two years, but it will matter to the future students in the same situation.

All School Boards have to deal with the spending constraints imposed by the Province. Others, such as Coquitlam and Surrey have made the identification of gifted students a priority notwithstanding budget issues. Vancouver needs to have the same priority.

You have saved the Athletic Coordinator and the Fine Arts Coordinator both of which, unlike the Gifted Education Mentor, are full time positions. The Gifted Teacher Mentor position fulfills the same role for gifted programmes and is just as needed.

Your cuts will further delay the diagnosis of those who need the service and effectively prevent the District from responding.

We urge you not to cut the GLD programmes off at the roots by implementing these cuts and in particular eliminating the position of the only person who deals with the programmes district wide.

Public Education Project
Presentation on the

2016/2017 Preliminary Budget
April 14th, 2016

Thank you for the time taken to receive responses to this preliminary budget and our opportunity to present to it. My name is Gwen Giesbrecht.
My name is Carrie Bercic.

We are here representing the Public Education Project. The project membership consists of educators, parents, students, former school trustees and community members who have had a many years of activism and advocacy supporting public education. Our goal is to improve support for learners in this district, and across the province.

There is nothing in this budget document that supports our goals, and there is nothing in this document to support the families who strive, to support their children's learning.

This is day three of public response to the preliminary budget. You, and we, have heard the passionate outcry against the reduction of supports for more than a decade, and proposed to be reduced even further. To claim that there are supports in place when support has been so gutted that it is rendered useless, paints a false picture of the reality of our classrooms. Ask any teacher, parent or student who seeks to find support and you will hear; that teachers are over-burdened, students are left to struggle alone. Families are forced to dig deeply into their pockets for resources that are often not there, in an attempt to fill in the gaps. Schools are falling into dis-repair and decay.

We are listening with shame and dismay of the devastating impact that the years of neglecting to fund public systems is having on a small community in northern Ontario. This is real, it is here, in Canada. It is the inevitable outcome when children, with all their wonderfully different abilities are treated as an unwelcome expense in a fast moving world. There is a woeful dis-regard of the importance in nurturing those that will build the future. Instead, we have the most important and effective public system, able to deliver the necessary tools for enrichment of lives, better outcomes for youth and healthy families, repeatedly attacked.

Until all levels of government understand that without children, all children, growing and thriving communities are dying. Vancouver, is at risk of demise. It must be acknowledged that a lack of affordable housing & childcare, the

disintegration of excellence in our public schools and development inhospitable for families is costing us a robust and developing community. Although sustainability is desired, our city is fast losing its most valuable asset for sustainable growth, children. We have a vibrant and diverse city that is applauded worldwide. We need to keep it intact,

Government must take the responsibility invested in them by the authority to govern and ensure that communities and cities of the future are enriched by the children and youth of today. Tomorrow's leaders and citizens, Vancouver's leaders and citizens, must be equipped now to move forward with confidence and competence.

We must take a stand. Send the message to Victoria that in this city we will start turning things around. We value our students and their families. We want families in this city and we want them supported so that this city is an affordable one. We want excellence in our schools so that all students, when they finish, are able to navigate with a sense of belonging, their home town.

There are repercussions to not passing a balanced budget. There are also repercussions in passing this balanced budget. We believe the questions trustees must ask themselves before voting are these:

Would you like to be the one taking responsibility for the impact this budget will have on public schools, students and families in Vancouver?

Or, would you prefer to have the responsibility for the impacts of these budget decisions fall squarely where they belong, on the shoulders of a government that has refused to keep pace with the funding required?

Thank-you

Presentation: Geoff Rousseau April 14, 2016

Re: E-10 Home Learners program

The following two documents describe the proposed changes differently regarding the home-learners program hosted at Lord Beaconsfield Elementary.

Preliminary Budget Proposal: E-10 Home learners program, Pg. 49

- Recommendation: Reduce teaching staff to 1.0 FTE
- This also documents the current base as 2.0 FTE, which is proposed to be reduced to 1.0 FTE (50% reduction in payroll expenditures)

The *2016/2017 Operating Budget Divisional Summary Org 046 : DL - VLN Home Learners, (Pg. 65)*

- Base Budget is shown as 1.68 FTE
- Reduction proposal is recommended as 1.0 FTE, leaving the program with only 0.68 FTE
- This would equal a 63% reduction in payroll expenditures

Presentation to the Vancouver School Board to Support the Gifted Learning Disabled (GoLD) Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of the Gifted Learning Disabled Program, the GoLD program. I principally address you as the parent of a child who has been lucky enough to be educationally saved by the GoLD program. However, I would like to add more general comments as a physician dealing with children and teenagers with complex pain problems.

I completely endorse the Vancouver School Board mission statement

Mission Statement: "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"

I also agree with the VSB's stated belief's on education, such as:-

We Believe

- That childhood is a unique and special time.
- In being strong advocates for the rights of children.
- In the provision of a wide range of programs, services, and resources to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all learners.
- In fair and equitable distribution of resources.
- that educational environments must be flexible and responsive to change.
- In the dignity of the individual and the development of self-esteem.
- In a commitment to excellence.

Unfortunately, the present budget cuts are not in line with these beliefs or the VSB mission statement, especially for gifted learners. The current updated budget proposal is improved from its original but still threatens to reduce Gifted teachers by 2.3 FTE. Although this allows the Challenge district-based programs to continue, the educational psychologist and the Education Mentor position for gifted learners are due to be axed. This will have devastating implications for current and future prospective students served by these programs and resources.

The Gifted Education mentor identifies potential students, advises teaching staff, and guides parents to ensure accommodations, enrichment and support strategies are in place for the classroom and at home. In addition, the Gifted Education Mentor advises, educates and supports application deadlines for referral to suitable programs in the VSB. The Educational psychologist assesses students recognised as potentially gifted. Psychoeducational assessment is a lengthy process involving several tests but is extremely valuable to establishing an individual child's learning styles and needs. A gifted learner with learning disabilities is very different to a purely gifted learner. These differences have been outlined by Jon Bromley from the GoLd Advocay Group earlier this evening. Gifted learners are highly intelligent with great potential. Gifted learners are the innovators, inventors and creators of the future. However, their performance in a mainline school, may be poor because their learning needs and styles are not realised. This means there is a vast mismatch between abilities and

academic success. This ultimately has negative consequences on a child's self esteem and confidence that impacts their desire to actually attend school. In addition these learners have greater needs because their gifted abilities are often associated with other issues such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, behavioural issues and learning disabilities outside of their gifted potential. Behavioural issues are often a reflection of boredom or frustration in a mainline class. Therefore, gifted learners, without education designed to meet their individual needs suffer personally and underachieve in school.

Over the years the numbers of students receiving gifted designations has dropped after targeting funding has dwindled. This is principally due to the reduced time commitment of the Gifted Ed Psychologist from 0.6FTE 2 years ago to its present level of 0.3FTE. Completely axing these two positions will eventually cause the system of education for gifted and GoLD children to fail through lack of recognition of gifted learners, perceived lack of need and inappropriate placement of gifted and GoLD learners. Lack of recognition of GoLD students is common as students who are Gifted/LD often do not get referred for assessment unless they exhibit a behaviour problem. Yet early identification is very important in the prevention of the aforementioned negative emotional responses.

As a pediatric complex pain physician I see many gifted learners in my clinic. Chronic pain is pain that persists for more than three months and often years beyond the expected time to heal from injury, surgery, or onset of a painful condition. Chronic pain is a complex condition that occurs and is maintained through a myriad of factors that include the pathophysiological process occurring in the nervous system, genetics, physical stressors, and emotional stressors. School that does not meet the individual needs of a any child is one of the emotional stressors commonly observed in the clinic. Therapy to resolve chronic pain issues requires that all factors that precipitated or maintain pain are addressed. For Gifted learners in our pain clinic the lack of psychoeducational assessment or programs that address their educational needs will ultimately make it extremely difficult to restore these children back to normal functioning and life.

All children, including Gifted learners have the right to the best education. Gifted learners need opportunities to learn at their own speed, opt out of work they already know and understand, accelerate through subject matter in areas of strength, study things that interest them, go beyond the basics, work with abstract concepts that require more than simple thinking, work with peers who share their interests and abilities, and participate in options that connect their learning to the "real world."

I recommend no cuts to the GoLD or other gifted programs to enable Gifted children to fulfill their unique and diverse educational potential.

And I leave you with some important questions:-

1) Why does the VSB have the lowest per-student funding in the country?.

2) Why are we parents presenting and competing against one another to prevent cuts to vital services when these services need to be expanded?

If proposed cuts to Gifted Education occur:-

3) Who will go to the schools to do outreach and educate teachers in recognizing gifted and gifted LD learners?

4) Who will help teachers and parents provide enrichment as well as accommodation strategies at the elementary level for gifted and GoLD learners?

5) Who will assess GoLD learners to establish their strengths and weaknesses and direct placement to the most appropriate secondary school?

6) If the VSB is handcuffed to these budgetary cuts then provide the parents and teachers with innovative ways to utilise charity or fund-raised resources to maintain and expand these essential educational opportunities, NOT CUT THEM.

April 12, 2016

Budget Committee / Trustees:

Re: Elimination of OSB (extra clerical) at schools with fewer than 50 staff members.

We are concerned with the recent VSB budget proposal stating that the position of OSB – Extra Clerical will be eliminated at schools with fewer than 50 staff.

We have attached this list of jobs and some questions with regards to issues that will arise.

Shaughnessy is a school with 420 students, however it is a very busy school and we have many interruptions.

The OSB (extra clerical) in this FTE job composition works at three schools:

Shaughnessy School (420 student population)
Elsie Roy School (424 student population)
Simon Fraser School (282 student population)

It is a concern that our school and many other schools that have under 50 staff members will lose this valuable help.

We thank you in advance for looking at our concerns.

Sincerely,

Alice Pisarek
Administrative Assistant
Shaughnessy Elementary School
4250 Marguerite Street
Vancouver, BC V6J 4G3
604-713-5500

and

Renee Unruh (*Speaker at Thursday, April 14, 2016 VSB meeting.)
OSB – Office Support B (extra clerical)
Shaughnessy School – Monday, Tuesday and alternating Thursdays
Elsie Roy School – Wednesday and Friday
Simon Fraser School – alternating Thursdays

School Reception

- Answering phones from parents, taking messages and relaying to other staff members
- Answering other staff's calls and dealing with issues, such as calling parents, confirming apts.
- Answering questions from students, staff and parents regarding school procedures
- Showing students how to use phone to call parents
- Looking up parent phone number for students who don't know their parents phone numbers
- Dealing with students who are sent to the office for discipline reasons
- Signing for parcels and mail distribution
- Parents phone in when a child is absent – advise teacher
- Dealing with late students / late slips
- Verifying if a child is at school (parents call to ask when a child has walked to school)
- Dealing with students who have not been picked up (after school, early dismissal dates)
- Calling parents to bring a change of clothes for their child
- Dealing with School Psychologist, Mulitcultural Worker, SWIS worker –
- Checking if a child is at school when Social worker calls from Ministry of Children & Families

SFE – Staff Absences

- Pulling SFE Report
- Noting on Daily Bulletin who is absent
- Dealing with Teacher on call/ Employee on call , key distribution, directions and pulling lesson plans where necessary
- Handing out School Support Workers - EOC instructions
- Signing time sheets
- Entering absences for staff

Registrations – New students

- Answering questions and confirming catchment school
- DRPC Registrations – contacting parents to set up start date and go over paperwork
- Photocopying documents needed for registrations
- Informing teachers of students starting and any pertinent information
- Entering registration in myed
- Request student records for new students
- (At Shaughnessy we have 9 registrations to process for students who are starting school next week)
- 1701 Information – ELL, Core French, Special Needs
- Advising parents and confirming attendance for Ready Set Learn and Welcome to Kindergarten
- Letters for Kindergarten Gradual Entry

Student Withdrawals

- Notify staff of student who will be transferring out
- Withdraw student from myed
- Send out student records to other public schools
- If child has transferred out to an independent school or has left Canada, we send PSR to VSB for filing
- If student has transferred out to an Independent school – file has to be photocopied and we archive the original student file
- Maintain student archives

Cross Boundary

- Cross Boundary – Answering parent inquiries
- Accepting forms
- Contacting parents to inform them of status of application
- Arranging with other schools to get registration documents
- Entering footprints for no show / transfer
- Maintain Cross Boundary wait list

Registrations for High School

- Give applications to students who have lost their forms
- Collect registrations and double check that all documents have been provided
- Dealing with parents who are surprised that their catchment school is not PW
- Dealing with parents who after they find out their catchment high school, come in with a variety of documents telling us that they have moved (we know this is not true)
- Pre-transitioning grade 7's to their next high school
- Double checking grade 7 files to ensure inclusions are entered and files are complete
- Sending out grade 7 files to high schools
- Many of our students go to Independent schools – therefore we have to photocopy many files

Student Attendance

- Pull Attendance Sheets
- Enter Attendance
- Call parents if a child is absent and we have not heard from them
- Filing of Extended Absence letters
- Enrollment confirmation letters (parents need these to apply for family allowance, msp, permanent residency,
- Pulling attendance reports for staff who are verifying students who have many absences

Student Records

- Set up regular student file
- Set up "Special Ed" files for Ministry Designated Students
- Student Inclusions – entry into myed and filing into student file – Sunnyhill, VCH, Psych reports, legal alerts, medical alerts, etc.
- Entry of Verification Reports – this is an update of student information, address, phone numbers, and emergency contacts.
- Requesting address change documentation from current students
- When students have moved, asking for cross boundary forms when appropriate (we have many of these situations)
- Filing Verification sheets, media consent, CASL,
- Pulling ELL labels for Teachers
- PEN Differential Reports
- **Since the transfer of bcesis to myed, much data has not been carried over and has to be double checked and often re-entered*

School Start Up

- Processing of all students who registered in the summer
- Preparing welcome packages for the beginning of the year – for students
- Preparing welcome packages for the beginning of the year – for staff
- Keeping track of keys issued and returned
- Typing up new staff list, assigning staff to rooms, divisions in myed bc.

Other Jobs

- Daily bulletin
- Monthly sign in sheet
- Distribution of regular mail and blue bag
- Sign for parcels – advise staff that parcel is here for them
- Call Engineer to meet drivers dropping off larger orders
- Distribution of faxes
- Helping staff with faxing
- Maintain general information binder
- Printing reports for staff and distributing
- Collect and set up email distribution list for parents and staff
- Communicate with parents on a variety of matters
- Send out Newsletter, notices electronically
- Collect Third Party Liability forms and get them signed and return to teacher / parent
- Typing up Certificates for Students
- Ordering forms
- Maintaining "VSB Forms" file
- Dealing with lost and found
- PA announcements
- Sports Day –

Photo Copier

- Photo copying – teachers on occasion send students to the office asking for copies
- Add photo copy paper to machine, deal with jams, place service calls
- Order toner
- Send toner back for recycling
- Provide photocopier codes to staff and TOC's (surprising how many forget these codes)
- Get up and go to photocopies to show them how to enter code (when they come back and inform us that code is not valid – when in fact, it is)
- Photocopying for Administrators

Report Cards

- Typing and handing out Report Card Time line for the year
- Preparing Parent Teacher Conferences / Student Led Conference Packages
- Prepare Silhouette Extract for Staff
- Prepare report card envelopes and labels
- Pulling ELL labels for Resource Teachers for Report Cards (all 3 terms)
- Pulling Attendance Labels for Teachers
- Entering PSR marks (students report card marks)
- Making sure we have copies for the student files
- File report cards for students who left early on vacation – distribute upon return

Emergency

- Attend Health and Safety meetings
- Inspection Checklist for School office and first aid room
- Assist with Emergency Information for Staff (Fire, Earthquake& Evacuation Plan)
- Critical Incident Phone Tree
- Emergency bin
- Pull reports, prepare backpacks and organize
- Assist with fire / earthquake drills – taking attendance etc.

- Collecting / photo copying student immunization records and forwarding to the school nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health
- Distributing / collecting immunization consent forms
- Liaison with nurse to set up immunization clinics and arrange for room, volunteer,
- Set up Dental, Vision and Hearing screening for Kindergarten students
- Look up student / parent information for nurse

First Aid (For all staff members and all the students)

- First Aid – *many, many interruptions* :
- Cleaning wounds, bandages
- Nose bleeds
- Taking out slivers
- Bee / Wasp stings
- Washing eyes when a child complains that bark mulch is in their eye
- Handing out ice packs and sanitary pads
- Students who are sick and are vomiting
- Monitoring and assessing children who are injured or sick
- Students who have had a #1 or #2 accident
- Help students to change their clothes
- Calling parents to pick up sick children
- Answering questions from parents who are unsure of what to do with child
- Call parents if child has been hit from the neck up
- Filling our first aid reports for children to take home for their parents
- Filling out "School Protection Program Incident Information"
- Going out to field to deal with children who are hurt and can't walk
- Dealing with broken bones
- Calling ambulance
- Calling Engineer to clean blood or other bodily fluids that might be in school or first aid room
- Maintain up to date "School Health Manual and Communicable Disease Information"
- Maintaining sneezes and diseases binder
- Check for lice
- If a student has lice – copy and send home letters to parents and information how to deal with lice
- Order first aid supplies
- Maintain first aid records
- Maintain first aid room
- Making sure that parents who have indicated life threatening conditions / allergies bring in the appropriate documentation and medications
- Contacting parents to bring in care plans and requests to administer medication
- Double checking that epipens, inhalers and other medications are not expired
- Filing out WCB Reports

Projected Enrollment

- Send our projected enrollment forms to parents
- Compile results
- Pre-transitioning students to Shaughnessy and other schools
- Registering students for following year (to date 89)
- Assigning next year home rooms
- Collecting "Late Return" forms for the following September

- Prepare Class Casting Labels (for all current students and incoming students)
- Keeping track of projected enrollment of students for the following year

After School Programs

- Taking registrations and money for after school programs – maintaining waitlist
- Sending out emails to parents regarding programs
- Sending paperwork to co-ordinator

Photographers

- Dealing with photographers
- Setting up photo days
- Sending home proofs
- Collecting orders
- Sending orders back to Photographer for processing
- Distribution of orders
- (this happens a couple of times a year)

PAC

- Help with collection of forms
- PAC Direct Donation Income Tax Receipts – co-ordinate with PA C and VSB

Accounting

- Collection of School Supply and Band Fees
- Remit to VSB
- Counting money
- Bank reconciliation
- Verifying dates on cheque , cheques sometimes not signed, amounts or school name missing
- NSF cheques – do journal entries and get funds from parent
- Issue cheques to pay for goods and field trips
- Maintaining the One Write system for deposits and cheques
- Pull Accounting reports for Admin
- Month end Accounting procedures
- Look after school's flex accounts – arrange for cheques, tranfers,
- Apply for GST Rebates
- Quarterly Reports
- Maintain classroom accounts and field trip account
- FAST accounting – verifying school flex accounts expenses, budget transfers
- June Year End Accounting

This is a list of what we do at the Elementary School level.
There are many other "interruptions" that we have to deal with, but the above are the most common.

Questions:

1) Currently, if there are training sessions at the board for the OSC (Secretaries), (myed bc, health and safety, first aid, etc.), the facilitators will schedule training times / dates for when the OSB (Extra Clerical) is at the school so that Substitute costs can be avoided.
With no OSB's who will cover for the OSC? The costs of EOC's will be quite large.

2) VSB Accounting has advised the OSC's to do their accounting in a separate space. At Shaughnessy, I go into a back office to count money, write cheques, prepare bank deposits, reconcile accounts etc. I save my accounting work for when my OSB is at the school, so that she can take care of all the demands of the office. What happens when the OSB is not here?

3) Recess / Lunch Breaks – in a large, busy school it is difficult to take an uninterrupted recess and lunch break. On the days when the OSB is here, these are days that I can take a break and actually have it in the staff room with the other staff. Again, what happens when the OSB is not here?

4) I try to schedule my doctor and dentist and other appointments on days that Renee Unruh (Shaughnessy Elementary's OSB – Extra Clerical who is here 2.5 days a week) is here to avoid having the expense of a sub. If I have no OSB, then I will still have appointments, but I will have to book a sub in for 4 hours. Sometimes my appointment is only ½ - to an hour and my extra clerical is here. If I have no extra clerical, then the VSB incurs a 4 hour sub cost which is unnecessary.

5) When I need to go to the bank, I plan to do my accounting and banking on a day that Renee is here – this allows me to go to the bank and the school office is taken care of.

Hello. My name is Wonyoung Park, a mother of 4 international students in Vancouver.

Two of the kids are in Eric Hamber Secondary school and the others are in Shaughnessy Elementary. We've been living here for two and half years.

I'd like to speak to oppose the budget cuts of the Korean multicultural liaison service today.

Korean multicultural liaison workers support students and their families who have difficulties with communicating despite linguistic or cultural differences like me.

And Vancouver School Board proposed the budget reduction of the Korean Multicultural liaison service based on declining enrollment of the new Korean students these days.

Even though the amount of the new Korean students' enrollment decreased from 1,062 to 627 between 2010 to 2016,

Korean students are the second biggest group of the foreign students in Vancouver School Board.

We faced a lot of, various issues everyday as an individual or a family.

However, imagine you have a serious problem in the foreign country where you cannot communicate in their language or you know nothing about their culture.

Most of people must be falling into a panic but what became of the situation if you have the same problem about your children's educational progress?

Whether you are a citizen or a foreigner, if you are a parents, your main concern will be your children. And the reason why so many people choose Vancouver for their immigrant will be that they want to let their children get a better education in the better environment.

There are always the gap between two countries and two languages when people moved to the new country. In my case, the biggest problem for our family was the difference of the school system in the secondary.

Every students can graduate from the high school in spite of their getting a bad score on their academic courses in our country. So I was a little bit puzzled when I heard the instruction of

Dogwood Diploma in the Korean multicultural education seminar at first.

It didn't look like hopeful and easy to graduate from the secondary school for my eldest son because he came here too late. (He was already in Grade 10 when he came here.)

It was also not good for me to learn about the different education system although I can speak English.

What if, another parents had faced the same circumstance like me, but they cannot speak English?

Someone would come out to help them? Or they should find the solution by themselves without any professional, linguistic help?

Does it seem like possible for the family having the language problem to find the educational information properly?

You might know the answer as you are already aware!

To consider above issue, I definitely oppose the budget cuts for the Korean multicultural liaison service. You should support the families who need the linguistic help for their kids.

Thank you.

VSB Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting
April 14, 2016

Good evening. My name is Vail Thomas and I run the Career Centres at Sir Winston Churchill and John Oliver Secondary Schools.

For anyone who has had, or currently has, a teenager, you've likely seen the thrill on their faces when they run in shouting "I got my first job!" or "I got accepted into university!", or "I got that scholarship!" We in the Career Centres are very fortunate to often hear those types of phrases. That is the sort of thing that bolsters job-satisfaction and continues to inspire.

So, what do we do? I have included in the submitted package a myriad of examples of some of the things we do.

(Read aloud a few highlights).

In a nutshell, I feel the main pillars are:

1. Volunteer and job search activities
2. Career exploration
3. Post-secondary programs, training and admission requirements
4. Financing post-secondary endeavours

And these services are available to each and every one of our 26,000 secondary school students and 3000 adult education students.

In the Ministry of Education 2016/17 – 2018/19 Service Plan dated February 2016 (http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2016/sp/pdf/ministry/educ.pdf?page=#4), it states:

"The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable the approximately 550,000 public and 80,000 independent school students, and over 2,200 home-schooled children, enrolled each school year, to **develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to contribute** to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy."

Career Centre staff provide the continuum of services and supports that help students develop their vision for their next step in life. **We help them to identify and develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities.**

That same service plan says:

"It is well known that engagement is a critical success factor in student achievement."

I suggest that students don't engage if they are not interested. If they don't know about a particular volunteer experience, or career information session or college open house, or if it isn't of personal interest, they won't participate. One of the great, individualized services we provide is to help match appropriate activities with their true interests. We can do that because we are right there, tapping particular students on the shoulder regarding particular opportunities.

Sure, events and opportunities can be advertised in student bulletins and on district blogs, but the reality is that many students are not diligent in reading the bulletin or searching out this information. That is when a face-to-face nudge can make the difference between no students attending a youth leadership conference versus a dozen; or only handful volunteering for a community event versus dozens or even hundreds.

As Trustees, you are in an unenviable position, having to rely on funds from the government for the vast majority of our budget. My comment to our Premier and Minister of Education:

On the last page of the Ministry of Education 2015/16 Grad Planner (www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/grad_planner.pdf), it states:

"Our commitment to education -
Education is the most important investment we can make in our children's lives.
The Province of B.C. is committed to building a top-notch system that puts students first."

Perhaps some of the advertising money the provincial government spends on projects that have not been proven and will not provide a return on investment for years to come could be better spent on our "most important investment."

Thank you.
(Attachment)

Role of CIA

This list is not exhaustive, but illustrative.

- **Run the Career Centre**- maintain the Career Centre, computers, resources, publications and books. This space is student hub. Used by students in all grades for a variety of purposes.
- **Post-Secondary Assistance to students and parents**
  - Assist students, individually and/or in groups, in exploring post-secondary options. Help individual students set their career goals, action plans.
  - Attend meetings and info sessions of universities, trade schools and colleges.
- Liaison with universities and colleges. Resolve student's questions or problems through our network of contacts with various institutions.
  - Deal, display, disseminate - mail, brochures, calendars from post-secondary institutions, advertise info in the daily student bulletin.
  - Help organize the post-secondary day for Gr. 11 and 12 students
  - Class visits with the counselors during the course planning sessions
  - Help students with course planning and course selection
- **Organize big Career Events in Schools like the annual Post-Secondary Day/Fair.** Representatives from various post-secondary institutions in BC come to individual schools and present. In some schools like Windermere, Vancouver Technical, Killarney, David Thompson, they are in the form of class room presentations for students and parents. In some schools like King George it is a fair for students and parents in Gr. 10, 11 and 12. This event needs a lot of planning, coordination with various post-secondary institutions, school facility, students and parents.
  - Help out in the Health and Careers Day for Gr. 8 students.
  - Hiring and recruitment fairs
  - Presentations by industry reps and Canadian Forces.
  - Course Planning presentations in classes, assembly, PAC meetings.
- **Trade, Apprenticeship and District Career Programs**
  - Promote Ace It and secondary school apprenticeship programs
  - Advertise these programs, help students with the paper work, coordinate with the staff at the Board
- **Grad Transitions Course**
  - This is a mandatory course for graduation. Help the grad transition teacher by conducting individual exit interviews with students, sitting in on student grad transition presentation.
  - Students have to submit some mandatory assignments. All the work that CIAs do for students, helps them complete these assignments.
- **Volunteer and Work Experience Opportunities**
  - Advertise, coordinate volunteer activities.
  - Help students find their 30 hours of volunteer work for Grad Transitions. Without 30 hours of volunteer or work experience, students will not graduate from high school.

- **Scholarships and Awards**
  - Research, compile and promote information regarding scholarship and other awards.
  - Assist students with the application process
  - Coordinate with the concerned teachers where ever nomination is required.
  - Attend Scholarship Committee meetings
  - In some schools, the CIAs sit on the Scholarship Committee and work very closely with the School Scholarship Chair

- **Financing Post-Secondary Education**
  - Help individual students budget and have a financial plan.
  - Arrange for guest speakers to talk about student aid and student loans
  - Help students with student loan application
- **Job Market**
  - Research and publish job market information.
  - Maintain and update the job market data base.
  - Advertise job opportunities
  - Help students with resumes and cover letters
- **Promote and Organize fieldtrips** to career fairs/ Job fairs/Colleges and Universities information sessions. For instance take all Planning 10 students to the Education and Career Fair, the largest Career Fair, at the Convention Centre. Take groups of students to BCIT Open House, JIBC Open House, SFU Open House, VCC Tour, VCC Try a Trade Event, Skills Canada Competition in Abbotsford etc.
- Help with special events like "Take Our Kids to Work" for Grade 9 students
- **Arrange for Guest Speakers to do lunch hour presentations**
- **Career Cruising and Career Planning** Help students individually and/ or in groups to match their interest, skills with careers.
- **Work Experience Course (help Career Coordinator)**
  - Promote and advertise the course
  - Help students with their application forms
  - Through our network help the Career Coordinator with leads for work experience employers
- **Publish Career Centre Bulletins and Career Centre News**
- **Students with special needs (in coordination with Resource Teacher)**

Help students with post-secondary choices on a one-on-one basis.
Help them with resumes and cover letters.
Share related info with the staff

- **First Nations Students (in coordination with the First Nations Worker)**

Pass on info relating to first nations.
Help students fill in scholarship forms
Help them with summer job placements

- **Workshops in Planning 10 Classes** on various topics such as Personality Dimensions, Careers Within Colours, Resumes and Cover Letters, How to Ace an Interview, Labour Market, Career Cruising, Career Theories, Careers etc.

CIA- Presentation on Thursday, April 14 at the VSB by Malini Rajkumar

Honourable Chairman Mr. Lombardi, Trustees, Superintendent Mr. Robinson and all the wonderful people who are here: Jackie, John and I Malini are humble Career Information Assistants. We provide one on one support to students, in every grade, to help them chart their post-secondary plans. As educators, we cater to the students needs of not just graduating from high school but to plan for life after. This can be further education in a college, university, trade school or upgrading in adult education centres or taking a gap year or working. Post-secondary scenario is so daunting and challenging, we help individual students set their career goals, break this into action plans, provide labour market information, liaise with colleges, universities and trade schools. Making the right career choice is very critical in student's life. This involves knowing a student, building relationship and trust, assessment of student's attitudes, aptitude, academic performance, thorough up-to-date knowledge of various programs and their admission requirements.

We provide exploration opportunities to students in every grade. Gr. 7 students even before they start high school are given a tour of the Career Centre. For Gr 8 students we support and help during their Health and Career days, provide them with volunteer opportunities. Gr. 9s we organize the Take Our Kids to Work Day. Gr. 10s are taken on a field trip to the Education and Career Fair. We facilitate workshops in Planning 10 classes on labour market, employment standards, personality tests, interest inventories, resumes and cover letters. Course planning is extremely busy. We help Gr. 10 and 11 students pick the right courses so that they meet the admission requirements of the post-secondary institution and the program they want to attend after high school. For Gr. 11 and 12s we organize the Post-Secondary Day Event. All colleges and universities in BC come to our schools and do either classroom presentations or set up a fair or do both. John, organizes the Gr. 10 Day at Tupper . An unique event . Instead of a regular school day, about 200 Gr. 10s attend this 2-day event that includes various workshops and fieldtrips on social responsibility, career education and health. Just yesterday Jackie and I took 6 bus loads of students to the Skills Canada Competition in Abbotsford. My personal forte is building relationships and partnerships with students, parents, post-secondary institutions and community members. I sat on the Board of local Community Policing Centre for four years which helped my students gain access to work experience there. They did foot patrol, bike patrol, checked for stolen cars, went on ride along in the police car. Another is the partnership with the YWCA Mentorship Program. Gr. 11 and Gr. 12 girls can sign up and receive free mentorship for one or two years from distinguished women in the career the students wish to explore and pursue. We are also the front line staff who promote trades, help students with their ACE-IT and Secondary School Apprenticeship applications.

The Career Information Assistants not only help students and parents but also work very closely with a variety of staff members in the school- Counsellors, Administrators, Office Staff, Work Experience Teachers, Resource Teachers, School Scholarship Chair, Heads of Department, Planning 10 Teachers, Trades Teachers, etc. 1/2

Career Centre, impacts everyone in the school. This is the student hub. Students visit the Career Centre not just for career advice but for other reasons too - have lunch, de stress, work on computers, chat with us, to connect with an adult they can trust and who will support them through high school. This is a safe environment The Principal, in one of my schools, used to walk around the hallways at lunch time. Any student eating alone, she would bring them to the Career Centre.

Honourable chairman, the proposed savings is $581,801 for nine full time positions. We serve 26,000 students in high schools and 1500 FTE in adult education centres.

In closing: We CIAs were already reduced from full time to half time on the 2003 budget. Eliminating this vital service will directly impact students and their future plans adversely. Please reconsider this cut. Thanks for your time and support.

Chairperson, Members of the Board, Superintendent and guests,

My name is Hans Ng, the Career Information Assistant at Britannia and Gladstone Secondary schools. I will be reading two excerpts from our support letters, followed by two brief letters. My colleague, Helen Lee will also read two excerpts.

Amy Alexander, Chairperson for PSI-BC wrote:

In the Vancouver district, the Career Information Assistants are critical to the planning and hosting of our Fall Recruitment tour at all district schools, as well as the important role they play in assisting and connecting students to the career resources provided by our members throughout the year.

On behalf of our members, we cannot emphasize enough how important it is to have the consistent year-to-year liaison provided by the Career Information Assistants, as Counsellors who rotate with students are not always current with the changes in our system.

Career Information Assistants provide current, accurate information to their students, connecting them to the post-secondary system throughout the critical period of career searching and planning in high school. It would be a great disservice to students if they were no longer available to provide this kind of support.

Nancy Cromarty, Director of University & Career Counselling wrote:

From my dealings with Universities across the country, a consistent theme and focus is being 'job ready'. It is the work that CIA's do in our schools that directly feed this philosophy. Internships, work placements, providing specific trades information and much more....these are what young adults need in order to be successful in our increasingly competitive work force.

Here is a brief letter from Lindsey Pagnucco, a Librarian at the Vancouver Public Library

Dear Hans,
I'm writing to express how much I value your contribution to teen services at the Vancouver Public Library. In particular, your support in promoting teen programs plus connecting students with community service opportunities such as Reading Buddies, Coding Buddies, and Teens technology events is much appreciated!
I look forward to our continuing collaboration.

And this is one of many examples from a grade 12 student that I assisted:

Hey Mr Ng,

Just wanted to say thank you for all your help in my graduation year. You've definitely helped me figure out all the different options that I have after Highschool and your resources have been very useful. Thank you once again for helping me plan out my future!
Best Regards,

My colleague will now read two more..

This is an excerpt from the Tupper Secondary's PAC letter.

While recognizing the very difficult position the Board is in regards to its budget, we believe that the elimination of these positions will have profound impact. One of the major purpose of secondary education is to prepare youth for a world beyond high school. It is a world that is complex, challenging and continuously shifting. Guidance is required to help navigate this new environment and to take advantage of its opportunities, and we do not believe that a single district wide position can offer adequate guidance.

This excerpt is from Leesa Alldred's letter, she is the Career programs advisor at Rockridge Secondary school in West Van.

The CIAs represent their high schools at all the post- secondary updates, round table discussions, fairs and events. They work closely with students and their families and know what information will be important to them. Students need support when they are planning their future. Some of the information students need to make good decisions can be obtained online or through automated systems *BUT transitioning from high school to a career is a very big undertaking and to be successful most students need one on one support.*

Right now the government of BC is spending significant amounts of money to promote skills training because of projected shortages of manpower in the province. One of the primary ways a student would find out about a career in the trades is through the apprenticeship in high school through programs like SSA, ACE IT, and VSB trades. Typically, the process of promoting the trades and finding and facilitating students interested in trades is a very hands on process, not something that could be done by one person out of the VSB head office.

Closing summary (if time permits)

These letters demonstrate how we play an important role in guiding our students, from their early years towards their senior year in high school. Our close working relationships with the Post-Secondary institutions and with the community enables us to bridge that gap between our students to their post secondary planning and in their future endeavors, we believe is imperative to their future success. We, as Career Information assistants truly believe that there's true value in what we do, and humbly take pride in doing our job. Please do not close these 20 Career Centres and allow us to continue with helping young people plan, and guide their future beyond high school. Thank you for listening.

April 14, 2016

Dear Budget Committee Members,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak about the proposed elimination of the Career Information Assistant positions in the secondary schools and the adult education centres.

I have been working as a CIA in Adult Education for the past 3 years. Prior to that, I worked in this role at 5 different secondary schools during my 10 years of employment with the VSB.

In Adult Education, I work with a great diversity of students whose ages range from 17 to early 60s. Some folks represent some of the most vulnerable members of society, such as people with backgrounds of homelessness, mental & physical health issues, abuse and addiction. Recent newcomers to Canada also make up a big part of our student population. Some are completing high school and are hungry for information about the labour market, post-secondary options and high opportunity occupations. Other immigrants have foreign credentials and are looking for information and guidance on retraining for a new career with good job prospects. I work with graduated adults who are paying $550 per course to get high school pre-requisites needed for a post-secondary program and we have ambitious international students with language challenges who are pursuing higher education and are needing extra support with applications, exploring options, and creating back up plans.

These students start and finish their studies at different times. They are on different graduation diploma programs or they are upgrading to meet post-secondary entrance requirements. With such diverse needs and circumstances, one thing that is common is their need for a more individualized approach to career and post-secondary planning. A lot of the information they seek is not easily obtainable from the internet. They have been to the websites and still have many questions and much confusion. With my knowledge of post-secondary programming, connections with admission advisors, insight into many of the career and applied skills program offerings and the admission process for competitive-entry programs and schools, I help students get clarity about what they need to do to prepare for their transition from high school.

Since Adult Ed has suffered such severe cutbacks in the past few years, the academic advisors are stretched and don't have the time to add career advising to their workload nor do they have the same level of expertise.

Here are a few examples of students I have worked with:

Kevin K. was a 28 year old Korean student from Main Street Education Centre. He came to see me after he'd been unsuccessful in getting in to BCIT's Occupational Health and Safety diploma, which only runs once per year. He had no idea how competitive this program was and I gave

him suggestions about what he could do to enhance his application for the coming year and he followed every one of them.

In an email he wrote to me, he says:

"I spoke to so many counselors at the school which I was applying to but they all didn't provide me enough information or guidance to prepare myself.

I have achieved so much in less than a year because of Patrizia and I strongly encourage you guys to keep the Career Information Assistant position for every other adult students. I know there are still many students who are like me and they really need someone to give them guidance. Without her help, I couldn't have done any of it and may still be working at some places where I have no future."

I recently met with James T., a 42-year old prospective international student and high school graduate from the UK. He came to Vancouver with the dream of getting a degree in Physics or Astronomy. He went to Langara and was referred to Adult Ed. After I met with him and helped him develop a plan, he wrote this email to me:

"Prior to us meeting I had no idea where to start and much information online led to dead-end. It's pretty frustrating when all you want to do is learn and all you get are roadblocks. So, because of you, I now have a clear path and if I make some huge discovery through the course of my studies, it would have been in-part from your guidance..."

My last example, Andrew T., a Main Street student and Graduated Adult wanted an environmental career, but was confused about the opportunities and training available and which were best suited for him.

He says in an email:

"I have currently been accepted into the Environmental Engineering degree program at UNBC/UBC, the only one of its kind in BC. Not only did Patrizia help me find a career I want to pursue but also the right program to get me there. Without Patrizia's help I would have likely only taken a few courses at VSB adult Ed then given up. Without a career advisor it is extremely difficult to know what career options are out there."

The VSB invested in these positions and the knowledge and expertise that we have acquired. We hope that there will be a way of retaining this resource in our schools.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Patrizia Paoluzzi

April 14, 2016

Trustees,

Thank you for providing me time to speak. I am here today to speak in regard to my own position. The Miranda Winn, Elementary Peer to Peer Teacher has a statement on behalf of the 3 teaching positions attached to my written submission. I am Joey Lau and have been working for VSB since 1990 in various capacities. I am a proud member of Canadian Union of Public Employees. I also want to acknowledge my adopted ancestors and peoples of the traditional territories of the Coast Salish - sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), selílwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) nations

The Peer to Peer Team has gone through the emotional upheaval time and time again. Coming to a realization that we are not fully valued. The Parking at Schools (F5) recommendation is a perfect example of this. The estimated possible $175 000 revenue generated has is more importance than a team of people who offer services that are relied on by so many. We all take enormous pride in our work and dedicate so much to the VSB that it is disheartening to know we are disposable. We all understand that there is a momentous task in front of you and finding solutions are not always clear and easy. The answer however is not in eliminating these our positions.

> "The Peer to Peer Support is an essential team member in the service delivery to students with complex needs."
>
> "The school based SSA must have support in understanding their role/responsibilities; understanding specific strategies being requested of them; managing specific relationships in, at times, very complex scenarios."
>
> "The P2P Support has extensive knowledge in direct support of complex students which differs from program planning. It is the essential day to day, minute by minute care and management of students who have exceptional levels of lagging skills. At times there is not a person on the school team who has experienced the needs at the level of some of our students within VSB. The P2P Support is the required expert in the areas of feeding; toileting; health management; and programming nuances which allow our students to have successful, meaningful days."
>
> "Without the service of P2P Support, the whole body of SSA's/SSB's will have fewer resources to support them in the actual daily delivery of service. This role is direct service to students...via their immediate support worker."
>
> - Patricia Eberwin – Area Resource Teacher

If we look to the future without these roles you will see a dramatic increase in workload in our schools. I ask you our elected Trustees, are we in the business of dumbing down our school

system just to save money? Or rather, should we not provide the best public school experience for our students, families, staff & school communities?

> "As you may know, the Multi Interdisciplinary Support Team works with the district's most complex school based situations. Our team relies confidently and consistently on the developed skill sets of the Peer to Peer for Support Workers position. Our tandem relationship is essential for providing students, teachers and school staff with crisis response and collaboration. MIST encourages you to reconsider the profound significance of cutting the P2P for Support Workers position; students with significant needs will be jeopardized"
>
> - Myrne Ross – Resource Teacher / Multi-interdisciplinary Support Team – (formally Peer to Peer Resource Teacher) Learning Services

It has been said on so many occasions "to keep the cuts away from classrooms". I absolutely agree, the Peer to Peer team works directly in many cases with students within these classrooms. We actually have a great impact on students. We work directly with Support Staff, Teachers, School Administration, District Staff, Students, and Families to ensure that the students that may not have the voice, have the best support in place possible. We build the confidence in students who have differentiated learning and physical needs to advocate for themselves. We are the staff who give opportunity for schools to understand how they can welcome all students. Having the Peer to Peer team in place we have seen reduction in absenteeism, increase in wellness in our staff, increase in professional development opportunities, Safer Schools through training in Crisis Prevention and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and the list goes on.

> "As a member of the Multi-Interdisciplanary Support Team, I rely heavily on Joey Lau and his Peer-to-Peer Support team. Members of the MIST are invited into some of the most difficult and extreme crisis situations in the school district. As we work with the school to piece together a new plan, to rebuild and restore peace and harmony in the learning environment, we often need to retrain the existing support staff: to help them to see their roles in a new light and to help them to learn new skills and strategies to approach their roles. Having the skilled and experienced personnel in the form of Joey Lau and his team, those who have been in the SSA role themselves, come in and model the skills and strategies, to talk to the front-line staff as a peer, is invaluable in our success in effecting real change at the classroom level.
>
> In addition, Joey is one of only three Certified Instructors in the Non-Violent Physical Crisis Intervention course (aka CPI). Without a full team of instructors, we will no longer be able to offer this course regularly, meaning that front-line staff who work hands-on with some of the most challenging students in our system, will no longer have access to the training; meaning more staff will get hurt, more students will get hurt and more classrooms will be left in crisis on a regular basis."
>
> - *Stephanie Koropatnick – Senior Trainer / Resource Teacher / Multi-interdisciplinary Support Team – Learning Services*

Without a strong team of CPI instructors, you will see an increase in staff injury and increase staff and student risk. As a senior trainer in Crisis Prevention and Intervention, the team works with the staff at all levels to ensure they are given tools to work with our most challenging and vulnerable students. Without this training more staff and students are at risk for serious injury. We already have record numbers of staff who are injured on the job. The Care, Welfare, Safety & Security is the primary goal of CPI.

> "Teachers are often new to resource and pick up small amounts of assignments without knowing the role."
>
> "Caseloads for student with low incident designations have been increasing for many years and can become political. Teachers and resource teachers need support to make sound decisions."
>
> "The position is already loaded with stress and to reduce support may well add a lot of pressure to employees."
>
> "It's a domino effect because classroom teachers are already experiencing challenges to be inclusive and sometimes don't have the time to interact with students who have low incident designation, have enormous amounts of paper work and meetings. If there is even less support from resource it will affect the classroom too."
>
> - Patti Outram –Peer to Peer Resource Teacher

In closing, reducing these positions is not the answer. The elimination of the Peer team will cost the board more than just fiscally. There will be an impact in programming and all students and the school communities will lose. Please re consider that the value is in our service and maintaining the roles primary. Solutions may be further found non human expenditures, like the Attendance Management System, Furniture and equipment and changes in many of our day to day practices.

Respectfully submitted
Joey (Littlefeather) Lau

Peer to Peer – School and Student Support (A/B)
Technical Resource D
CUPE Local 15

VBE Trustees & Board,

In April 2015, a UBC article on teacher mentorship came outstating that roughly 30% of teachers leave teaching within the first 5 years. The article cited the departure cause as 'teacher burnout' as new teachers typically feel overwhelmed with the complex job of teaching. Such things as long and short term planning, developing fair and authentic assessment strategies, differentiating for students who have learning challenges all demand time, energy and attention. Having to balance these and other organizational elements with the day-to-day demands of teaching can leave teachers stressed and anxious. The article then states that mentoring not only reduces teacher burnout and turnover, but ups career satisfaction. Happy and engaged teachers mean happy and engaged students, and this of course leads to improved teaching and learning.

The Peer-to-Peer teachers (one for elementary, one for secondary, and one for resource teachers) work with Teachers on Call, early career teachers, teachers who are new to their assignment, and teachers undergoing an evaluation. In particular, we work with teachers to improve any aspect of their instructional practice, ranging from effective classroom management skills to motivational and engagement strategies. We meet with these teachers before, after, and during school hours as many times as needed. We do classroom observations, demo lessons, as well as provide several workshops and professional book clubs throughout the year.

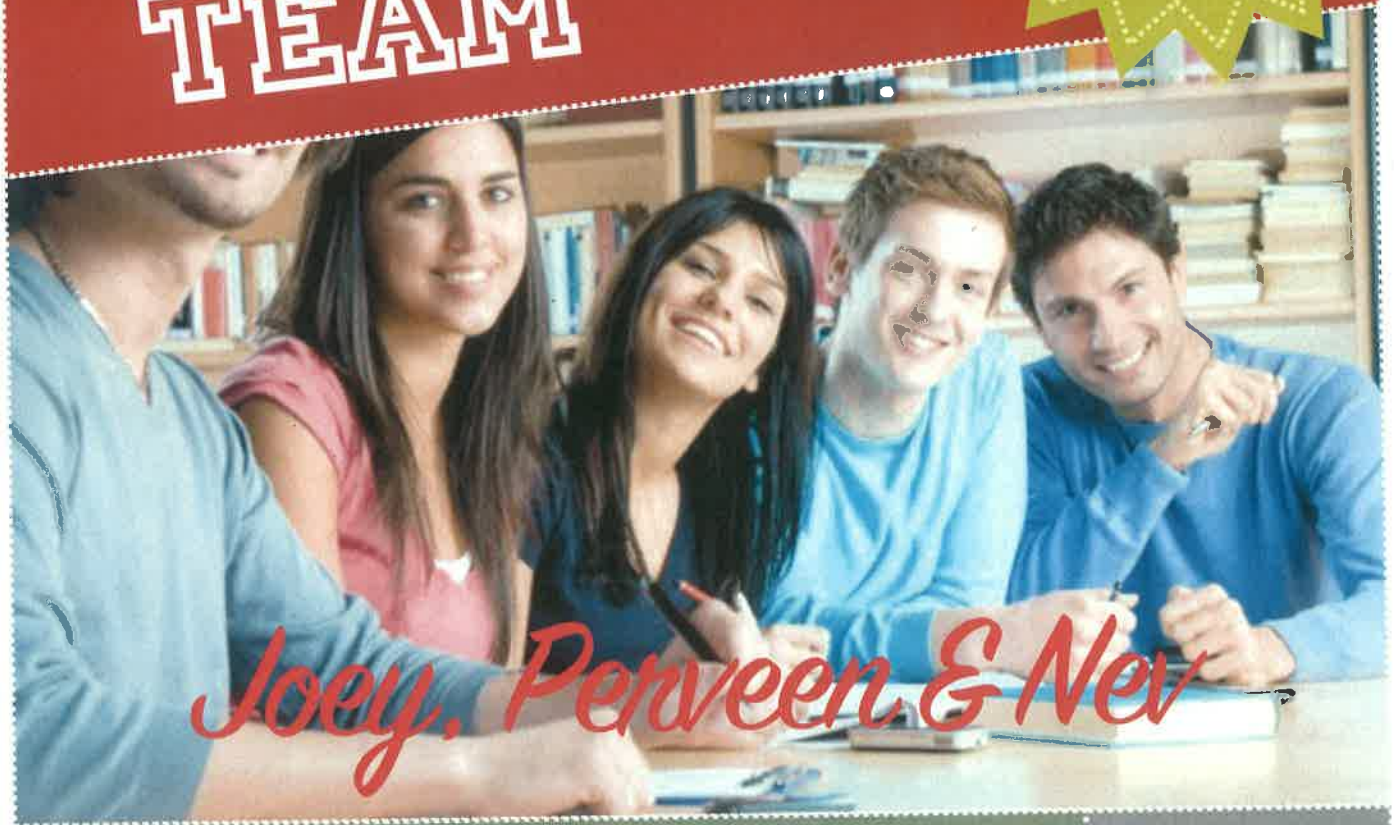
We are then appealing to you to find ways to save the VSB teacher mentorship program which has been in existence for the past 8 years, serving hundreds of VSB teachers. If we are left without it, we will become the only district in the Lower Mainland without a professional support program for teachers, shortchanging both them, as well as thousands of students who have benefited from exceptional instruction

Submitted by Miranda Winn, Peer to Peer Elementary Teacher
on behalf of
Marzena Michalowska, Peer to Peer Secondary &
Patti Outram, Peer to Peer Resource Teacher

VSB

PEER SCHOOL & STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

for SSAs & SSBs



WE CAN HELP WITH

- Scheduling / Time Management
- Positive Behaviour Intervention Support
- Support Strategies
- Workshops / Professional Development
- Team Building
- Effective Communication Skills Development
- Crisis Development Intervention & Prevention Skills (CPI)
- Resource Sharing
- Visual & Technical Support w/ Communication Systems and Devices
- Support and Understanding your TOOLKIT (IEPS, EOC Binder, Employee Safety Plans, Behaviour Plans, Health Plans etc.)
- Skill Acquisition
- Conflict Resolution
- Mentorship
- and more...

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Peer to Peer Resource Teacher Support

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Elementary Classroom Teacher Support:
Miranda Winn
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Secondary Classroom Teacher Support:
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Here to work with Resource Teachers in:

- Program Planning
- Program Implementation
- School Based Team (SBT)
- Pre-referral Intervention forms (PRIS)
- Intervention Strategies
- Assessment
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Case Management
- Reporting
- File Management
- Instructional Strategies
- Collaboration with Classroom teachers

In service workshops are also available upon request.

- Resources

My name is Linda Fox and I have been a secretary with the VSB for 20 years. It appears to me that when the VSB deals with keeping to a budget, they chop the jobs of the lowest paid, ie. CUPE members, who are predominately female and many single moms.

When my administrators informed me that they would be at a meeting at head office to hear about the budget, my response was "I hope this time the priority would be to keep people before keeping buildings open."

After working for 20 years, you hear about all the schools that have less than 100 students, and I ask myself, why are they kept open? You don't have to walk far to get from one elementary school to another. Also, you hear about all the land and buildings that the VSB owns. Why can't we sell a piece of land that would take care of shortfalls for the next 10 years?

Why not raise the $25 school supply fees? Or ask parents to purchase their own. We are subsidizing all of the students who are already getting a free education. School supplies for a year costs a lot more than $25.

I am aware that the VSB has moved out departments and rented out space at head office. Wasn't there a

happening, there have been many extra duties in the past 20 years added to our workload. The school nurses were removed and so I am left with being the nurse, but without extra pay. Then a cut to accountant visits to the school, just add that on to the secretary, but without extra pay. Our data program can do 100 more things than our program of 10 years ago, again, add more data reports to the equation, but no extra pay. With each new student data program that has been implemented, we are required to more and more.

My School, Elsie Roy, in Yaletown is extremely busy. We have parents registering non-stop. My catchment has no houses, it is all 50+ story highrises. I have waitlists for 2016, 2015, 2014. When you are turning away parents who just bought a $1million condo, and tell them they have to get their children to a school miles away, with no school bus, the conversation takes time. And that's daily. Added to that, reports after reports of data; I am responsible for every penny in and out of the school, ordering supplies, cheques, counting of money, depositing money, and then putting all that data into the computer. The little ones come into the office constantly for first aid. The phone never stops ringing. I have 40 staff who rely on me for everything.

attempted my job for even ½ day, without a doubt I am positive you would return to your desk and reinstate the clerical staff.

2016/17 VSB Budget Public Input – Representing Bayview PAC – Gili (5 min)

Good evening.
My name is Gili Avrahami and I'm representing Bayview School tonight.

I struggled with the ethical question of whether or not to participate in this version of The Hunger Games. I opted to view these presentations as painting a picture, allowing us to try and grasp the intricate tapestry that is Vancouver schools' community, so rich and diverse. Each presentation is shedding light on specific line item in the proposals, one cut, one program or service eliminated, and showing us the **intolerable** price that individual students, parents, and staff will be paying, if this budget is accepted.

Bayview is part of this tapestry. Located in the heart of Kitsilano, it opened its doors in 1914, a community school - no longer by funding, but still in name and spirit.

Our Community is made up of 260 families from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds, including the Canadian Armed Forces Garrison,
Housing co-operatives, and working professionals.
Almost thirty percent of Bayview families are single parent households.
Of the 330 students, 17 percent are English Language Learners, and 12 *percent of our students meet the Ministry of Education* criteria for Special Needs, with many more still not diagnosed and waiting to be assessed.

At Bayview, one of the grade 6 -7 classes has 29 students, with 9 students with designated Individual Education Plans (yes – that's 31%) – there is 1 support worker, assigned to one of these students who requires a full time support.
The other 8 students with IEPs receive **Zero** extra support in the classroom.

We have a library at Bayview. With a tree in the middle. There is a bench around the tree and students can seat there and read. (photo) These days the library is closed as often as it is open. I am told that 15 years ago we used to have a full time teacher librarian. Our library hours were cut again and again, this year we are left with only 2.5 days. Some classes no longer attend the library on a regular weekly basis. A grade 5 teacher told me her students keep asking "when are we going to have library time?"

At Bayview, my daughter's class (grade 4-5s) had an artist visit today. They had 3 sessions over 3 weeks, 2 hours each session, when an artist came to class, teaching them the art of drawing, they were drawing flowers on canvas.
Gone are the days when teaching the Arts and professional art teachers have been part of the

core program. These days, my daughter's class had to fundraise in order to have a short but meaningful art experience. Sadly, we recognize that most schools cannot afford both the fundraising and the substantial parental support that is required for such a project.

Bayview is one of 31 schools which currently have Reading Recovery and Early Intervention program. Research suggests that "a child's reading level at the end of third grade is a more accurate predictor of school success, than any other variable". Still in Vancouver, we offer this program in only one third of our elementary schools, and current budget cuts will see a decline in these too.
Due to cuts in previous years, resource teachers do not get a substitute until the 3rd day of absence, consequently leaving ELL and Reading Recovery students without service.

At Bayview we have large, busy classrooms, so our advanced students depend on the district's Gifted Outreach programs to keep them challenged and motivated. Cuts to the Mentorship and Seminar programs as well as losing the Gifted Education Mentorship position, will mean some of our most promising kids will be left behind.
Intermediate students at Bayview are looking for secondary options that will provide a learning environment to fit their learning styles, such as Mini schools. My older daughter has recently joined the Prince of Wales mini school in grade 9 - first time since Kindergarten that she's found her place, socially, academically, and emotionally.
Mini schools will also be disappearing if this budget is approved – there is no way to administer **any program**, including Mini school enrichment programs, without administrative support.

We understand that your role, as trustees, includes balancing the budget. But your role is also to ensure our children receive quality education. Our schools can no longer provide that education under the pressure of these continued cuts.

We are worried that with these kind of cuts to our schools, the safety of our kids is compromised and is no longer guaranteed. There are simply not enough adults in the building to address the complex needs of hundreds of children.

It is our view that every one of the proposals to balance this budget are **unacceptable** and that the funding received from the province has to be adequate and appropriate for such a central mission as educating the next generation.

Thank you!

Hello, my name is Ellen, 4th year UBC student in statistics program. Today, I want to share my experience as an international student and the support I received from a Korean Multicultural Worker.

I came to Vancouver in 2007 and was placed as grade 8 student in Vancouver Technical Secondary school. I could not speak English was placed in ESL program. Because I was shy and perfectionistic, I did not dare to talk unless the sentence I planned to say was perfect. A few weeks passed and I hardly speak to anybody or making any friends. Figuring out the schedule and block system, planning out for courses, moving from class to class which I never had to do in Korea were very stressful. It was harder to receive and ask for help on my own because I did not know where to turn to in which situations. (For example, when the science fair was going on, I wasn't sure what I was supposed to do till I was re-explained and received extra help.) However, that's when a Korean multicultural worker visited me and provided lots of support that I needed emotionally and academically. She also introduced me to a grade 12 student who was the only other Korean speaking student in my school at that time. Whenever she came to see me I was so happy and relieved. She encouraged me and guided me to involve with school clubs and after school activities, communicated with teachers on my behalf, helped me to fill out the forms and most importantly, kindly listened to me when I was frustrated, anxious and lonely. Throughout my whole high school years, it was great comfort for my mom who doesn't have any idea how to support me in new school culture and system when my dad was living and working in Korea.

My sister who was in grade 3 when we just arrived in Vancouver also received a lot of support from a Korean Multicultural worker in language and cultural aspects. My mom wanted to check how my sister was doing because my sister has been crying several times in class for a few weeks and was frightened to go to school. However, due to the language barrier, it was hard to communicate with teacher on her own and there was nobody she could speak Korean in class. Whenever my family faced to deal with new, unfamiliar school system and different culture, we contacted a Korean multicultural worker – for us it was Mrs. Yoon. She set the meetings between my mom and my sister's teachers and sometimes principal as well as gave us advice and counselling to overcome difficulties in various occasions. Checking the progress via meetings and learning how to read report card and receiving feedbacks frequently, my mom could find herself at ease and my sister could adjust to new life here.

Whether it was technical or emotional support, a Korean multicultural worker was always there to assist us through the phone calls and the meetings with her most caring and professional manner.

I graduated as an honour student in high school and am currently finishing my studies in UBC and planning to pursue teaching in near future to give same help I received when I was in high school. My sister is finishing her IB program in Churchill secondary school and going to achieve her dream as a lawyer. We find this place as our second home and had successful student life. Recently, our family became Canadian citizens as well. A Korean multicultural worker played a huge role on our successful student life in Vancouver schools by timely providing lots of consultations and introducing to countless opportunities for us to flourish and make us feel belong here.

Getting lots of attention and support in cultural, emotional and academicals aspects as an international student is most critical. I urge you not to reduce any Korean Multicultural services. I strongly believe that you should at least maintain this essential services to the International students with a millions of dollars that they are bringing in to the Vancouver School Board, hence provide the International students an equal and fair opportunities as other students whose native language is English.

Hi My name is jayni Borgaro

I'm here to talk about the Home Learners program at Lord Beaconsfield.

Before my husband and I had kids, my husband said he wanted to homeschool. I said, You're crazy, good luck with that. Now we are homeschooling twins age 7. Last year before they graduated from their Montessori Kindergarten we started looking into our options. We went to schools near our house, looked into Tyee Montessori and went to conference rooms filled with private schools handing out swag and brochures. Nothing seemed the right fit so now we are homeschooling.

There are other school districts offering home learning programs in Vancouver. I choose Lord Beaconsfield over the other programs based on the description of the Home leaners program on the VSB website.

'The Vancouver Home Learners Program provides choice and flexibility for children and parents to partner with the public education system in designing learning experiences that are unique to every family.'

To me that sounded like the very best of both worlds. Partnering with experienced teachers to design learning experiences, yes please! where do I sign up. The first day of school I went to Lord Beaconsfield and registered them in the Home learners program. The day my children and I met Shannon Hobson and Julianna Lee we designed our learning plan.

After hearing other parents talk Tuesday night I realized there are other ways that the Home Learners program helps the school district.

It keeps students in the district because of its flexibility.
It keeps students in the district who are not ready for the full time school experience.
It keeps students in the district who need more flexibility to do specialized activities.

When I read the Ministry of Education's Redesign of Curriculum I was flabbergasted by what I read.

'To Maintain high achievement, British Columbia must transform its education system to one that better engages students in their own learning and fosters the skills and competencies students will need to succeed. One focus for this transformation is a curriculum that enables and supports increasingly personalized learning, through quality teaching and learning, flexibility and choice, and high standards.'

The Home Learners Program at Lord Beaconsfield is doing that right now and could be a resource for the new curriculum. The teachers would be a fount of knowledge for personalized learning.

The home learners program is a multi age group. We need two teachers to handle the load of 38 students' personalized learning plans and we need two teachers to help enrollment grow.

Home learners are self directed students. Students who approach education with passion because they are designing their education with their parents and their teachers. These are the students who make replicas of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in Minecraft or bring play dough models of wild animal droppings for show and tell.

On Tuesday night I was impressed that a 11 year old student from the home learners program spoke in front of a full auditorium and faced you to speak about an education she felt worth fighting for. I could not have done that at her age and I tried to convince my husband to speak tonight.

I would think you would want to keep a program that turns out such amazing young people alive and kicking.

thank you.

Good afternoon. My name is Galen Hutcheson and I'm here on behalf of the Maple Grove Elementary School PAC.

I'm new to the levels of despair and frustration, rampant in our education system because for the last 9 years I was having 3 kids. Next year all 3 will be attending Maple grove and as I come out of the triage of babies/ diapers and constant sleep deprivation from The Land of the Littles, I am equally confounded and enraged by what lies before for **all** our children in this starving educational climate.

By the time my kids leave Maple grove, we parents, teachers and support staff will have been holding up the walls for 12 years. A lot of change can happen in 12 years, and like many of parents, activists and life long learners, I'm waking up to the fact that DESPERATE change is needed.

It's taken 3 years for me to learn a little our school system and to appreciate and revere the dedication of the many fabulous staff that do their utmost to engage and inspire without the tools and supports they need.

At Maple Grove Elementary school we have a Super Librarian. Linda Tornroos has cobbled together with glue and tape in the heart of school - a community space where parents meet weekly for coffee, connection, support, information, chocolate and charm. She and the space she has created continue to be instrumental in identifying children with special needs, families who are struggling, and kids who are coming to school hungry. It provides a sacred space where stressed, socially emotionally overloaded children who just need a safe, quiet, nurturing place to regroup can find haven. To imagine our school without our librarian and without the early literacy programming that is essential to children like mine... well that's what made my hair turn red!

I want to reiterate the collective and unequivocal condemnation of any further cuts. I will add that our school stands with The Parents Action Network (PAN) in it's belief that :"All children have a right to a 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" .

This seems like such an inherently reasonable, dignified and profoundly vital sentiment....that because I'm new to this landscape I have whiplash from all the spinning , looking for the resources that aren't there, and the help that should be.

For me this deep injustice is most stark as I try and support my special needs child with help I can not give her because she spends most of her day held hostage to an education system that is so broken, that it keeps stealing crumbs from the most vulnerable for sustenance.

My middle daughter has two diagnoses one which effects 20% of a typical population and the other about 16%. So although I'm talking about my kid, I may

also be talking about yours. Or in fact, a child who is, through no fault of their own-impacting a classroom your child shares.

Although both her 'special needs' used to qualify for full funding, with the ongoing cutting and leaching of a system that is now bleeding out, now neither of these areas of challenge qualify for funding and its accompanying support. Any further cuts to Student Support Assistants would be beyond devastating.

This affects all the kids, all the classrooms, all the teachers, all the learning outcomes, and all the hope.

I've heard some provincial rhetoric that says 'we're spending more on education than ever before', to that spin, I say 'I spend more on a loaf of bread than ever before. But it's the same loaf; only now its rotting and everybody is starving.

Cut nothing! Instead, make the goal of this election cycle our shared value : How do we rebuild a meaningful learning system and defibrillate our public education, so we give our most vulnerable population the justice and education they are legally entitled to.

In closing, every line item on this list of proposed cuts describes essential services that work in concert to support students. As we have heard tonight all our children are suffering from unmet needs. We need collective action and a definitive rejection of this budget to build a generation of exceptional life long learners and leaders. This is essential for future hope and success.

Thank you

My name is Debbie Mohabir and I'm here to share some personal experiences as an ssa as well as give you an idea of what it is that we actually do so that you can understand what the proposed cuts will mean in schools and to the students we support.

I'm an ssa at Charles Dickens Elementary School. Dickens is a multi-age/grade school with a great community feeling, we are more like a family. Staff, families and students are very connected.

I've been an ssa for 10yrs and currently work in a district program with 15 designated students with learning challenges and social/emotional issues for ½ time and the other ½ I'm with another student who is profoundly intellectually disabled so in all I support 16 students. The students in my program are a mix from within the school and students from other schools in the district. They have a difficult time keeping up in a regular class and need things to be slowed down, lessons explained in a different way and 1 on 1 support. When I first started I was in the program full time which allowed me to support students with their work but as I slowly learned these students needed much more than help with math, language arts, reading etc, they needed help to communicate properly, support to solve problems, guidance with problems at home, and people in their lives that they knew would help them. Our class is a safe place and the teacher and I have always said that we are all like a family, maybe that's why I've been called "mom" accidently on numerous occasions! With 100% support the students have been able to gain self confidence and their self-esteem has flourished. We all know that students can't learn without self confidence and self-esteem. They were able to become leaders join track & field, Green Team, Library monitors, and Student Council. They started to become confident enough to volunteer to help out around the school when the VP needed help and slowly became some of the "go to" kids of the school. Unfortunately the following year I was cut to 75% and now I'm down to 50%. Being in the class for only 50% has been quite frustrating for me, the students and the teacher. I haven't been able to help them as much as I couldve had I been there full time. The students have been so use to me being there as someone to go to. The teacher has to schedule certain subjects such as math and language arts around my timetable so that I can be there or else he wouldn't be able to teach. I spend the majority of my day supporting all of the students that I work with as best as I can but to be honest I'm exhausted at the

end of the day and feel stretched thin! These students are so amazing and I have felt privileged to have worked with them and their families for the time that I have, next year 8 of them are off to high school. I have watched these vulnerable kids grow and become confident learners I just wish I was able to do more there is just not enough time.

As for the other student I work with well he spent most of his schooling with not enough support but we finally got him the right designation and now he has fulltime help (split between myself and another ssa). He is a gentle giant, very quiet and shy and needs 1 on 1 support with all areas of school. I slowly found out that he has quite the sense of humour and sometimes we spend more time laughing than actually doing school work. He now talks to students and staff in the halls, finishes projects, learned how to bake and he always has a smile on his face with this new found confidence. This is his last year at Dickens, he will be off to high school next year.

This is just a tiny snippet of what I do as well as many other ssa's everyday. We aren't just people who are tasked to support designated students, we wear many hats. In a day I am a mother, sister, Dr, Dentist, nurse, therapist, counsellor, advocate, educator, and social worker, I'm sure there are more hats that I wear that I don't realize.

Cutting 5 SSA's might not seem like a lot but it is and vulnerable students that deserve and need support will be going without help and that doesn't sit right with anyone. It takes a village to raise a child and a school is that village. We all work together cohesively to educate children, we each have a role. The proposed cuts to SSA'S, OSB's, CIA'S and the Braillest is taking away part of that village.

I don't envy the position you all have with this budget but I am asking you to do the right thing and don't take away these vital positions. It's a disservice to the future of our children. They are not numbers in a budget and neither are we, we are all human beings. Education needs to be properly funded. Please do not pass this budget.

Phone: 603-713-5286Call: 603-713-5286
Email: budget2016-2017@vsb.bc.ca

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To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this heartfelt email re your proposal to cut the Fine Arts budget.

I am writing as a tax payer who had three children in the system. One is a lawyer, one is builder and my daughter is Special Ed assistant in Langley.
I have lived in Vancouver since 1967.

At present I have one granddaughter in Grade one, one grandson going into school next Sept, and one grandson only one year old: all live in Vancouver, and all of the parents educated in Vancouver System. I am writing on their behalf, as i must.

I am requesting to speak as a citizen, concerned, and as a grandmother, very very concerned for my grandchildren.

I will say the following:

The head of MIT said thirty years ago, our century(20ieth century) ,will be known for a great amount of knowledge but a lack of wisdom .

When I heard of your proposal to cut funding to the Fine Arts, the dean"s Socratic wisdom, and warning surfaced in my brain, and yes in my heart.

What we learn in Math, Science might or might not enable happiness or success in our hi-tech century.

I know for certain, all that will be lasting is our love of Art, Music, Dance, Drama (Theatre). Think of your own lives when you travel, do you do Math, or Science, which of course is pivotal to our lives? Do you not find yourself along with myriad people from all cultures, all walks of lives, at the opera, either inside or outside like they do for Austrian people, or wandering art galleries and museums?

Do you wonder why governments fund the arts and museums; it is quite obvious, it is the arts that allow us to be civilized?

Angry terrorist destroy art, and civilizations including most of the art is destroyed by the conquerors. I wonder why???

In the Holocaust, one of the survivors at Auschwitz was asked how they remained civilized and how could they possible whittle creations with the inhumanity inflicted upon them. He said , we were called dogs, treated worst than dogs, so all that was left for us, to remind ourselves that we were civilized humans. The only message to others and ourselves, was revealed through our creativity: art.

In marginalized, South Africa in the townships, the youngsters sing on the way to the toilet. At night the adults sing and dance around the campfire, and survive somehow, even with smiles. One more example of how to remain civilized. I had the privileged to dance with them, and to join with them as one. What a privilege. I want this for all of our students, not just the entitled ones, where the parents raise the monies to give all of the enrichment.

The entitled children, can afford the Fine Arts. When I take my grandchildren to children's theatre, I do not see the east side children, as parents are unable to afford the ticket. I do; however, now see the same children and students in orchestras, in bands, in theatre, in choir, and I marvel at their art. If you decide to cut the funding, who, and what will we leave behind, and what will we offer our future students?

Look at the challenge and possibilities of the immigrants now joining us, who might never reach their artistic potential .

Where is your thinking re our future? We are supposed to be the greenest city in Canada, and now with these unwise consideration, you will retard the movement forward in our path to become more civilized and more of guardians, for our future generations.

A Science fiction story, spoke of how the future generation will try us in their courts of law and find us irresponsible in the way we ravage their earth, and how we did not champion the way to be civilized. I maintain, as I am thinking, that our only redemption will be through the Fine Arts.

Fine Arts is perhaps the gate into our adult years, and our new consciousness.

I am speaking for my grandchildren, and their grandchildren. As Canada becomes more of a polyglot, instead of a mosaic, we need to create, the new Matisse, the new Karen Kain, the new Sir John Guildford, and the new musicians. We have so much talent in this city, based on amazing Fine Arts programs offered.

In Budapest on one or two blocks more Nobel Peace winners lived. I asked why. It seemed that educational senior teachers produced incentives and encouragement for their bright students. Once again the heroes , and heroines not the politician, not the administrators, but rather the teachers, not only our academic teachers essential to continue our innovations, but the essential Fine Arts: the words say it all : Fine Arts.

Justin Trudeau has promised to keep our bright lights here in Canada; I hope I will continue to see our accomplished students represented in one of the most coveted cities in the world: Vancouver. This produces for you a challenge, but I am sure with transparency now in our society, you will make wise decisions,and not short sighted decisions.

I unfortunately came from a working class home, where Western movies the constant. At 16, I was taken to my first orchestra. I felt like Balboa seeing the Pacific, for the first time.. From that introduction, my horizons moved beyond my family of origin.

I only wish I could have the teachers: the mindfulness, the touring that our Fine Arts student are given. The students have been privileged to receive such a wealth of possibilities, and I expect this 'headstart" will give them all the advantages they will need to compete, and be successful in our global world.

Before you make this " difficult budget, decision, please attend our local theatre, and you will see many of the actors come from Lord Byng, and Templeton's theatre programs. Look at the art in your school board foyer from your students in the Vancouver schools. I hope that you will acknowledge the exceptional training and creativity which produces the outstanding work within our Fine Arts program in our schools.

Look at your Fine Arts teachers who are expertly supported by their Fine Arts co-ordinator who continuously encourages the knowledge, and innovative teaching linking the students with the professional community resources.

Would we not all have loved the enrichment that the Vancouver school currently offers to students and our future students and for our adults!

Your Fine Arts programs are show cased in so many myriad ways, including at international conferences.

Before you decimate what you already have in place, look into your hearts, and look to and for our future students., and citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna May Webb BA RTC

I have been asked to present on behalf of Rayana Garen, who could not be here tonight due to a family emergency. She is a member of the PAC of Nootka Elementary, and the following are her words:

Hello VSB Trustees & staff, and fellow concerned Vancouverites.

Thank you for the opportunity to express some of my concerns with the proposed budget.

I understand that our provincial government has put GREAT constraints on the VSB for budgeting while ignoring and distancing themselves from the consequences. BC, a province with a budget surplus, technically has the 2nd lowest per-pupil funding for public education in Canada—but in reality I say it has the worst because I'm sure that in PEI they get a lot more bang for their buck and their teachers can probably afford to own homes where they teach—but I won't digress.

What disappoints me most with these proposed cuts are the immediate and long term consequences to our young and most vulnerable citizens. One out of 5 children in BC are living below the poverty line, and half of those are in Vancouver.

Schools are an institution where our young people are entrusted for approximately 6 hours/day, 5 days/week, 10 months of the year. These are a lot of hours of growing and developing for our dear children! When I say "our dear children" I mean our own offspring and all the precious children in Vancouver and British Columbia. Children who have the right to safe, equitable, public education. Schools have an influence and responsibility that reaches far beyond simple academics. When our young, developing children go to school, they bring with them all their personal and individual gifts, quirks, and needs—some which may be *special*. These needs may include extremes in academic abilities, experiences of discrimination based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, culture, physical/mental/emotional/social capacity, the effects of colonialism, economic limitations, family dynamics, etc.

Our children, families, and communities depend on schools to support the well-being and safety of all children, regardless of the depths of the support they need beyond academics. How available will our public school teachers be if enrolling teachers have larger class sizes and less support from resource teachers, librarians, and the various mentors? How available will the administrators be for vulnerable children and families if they are filling in for office or other staff who aren't available and for whom no substitutes can be called in? What about schools that have only a principal or vice-principal, not both?

Nootka Elementary is one of the more fortunate schools in Vancouver. For one thing, it is a single story, 50 year old building, so we are somewhat less concerned about seismic upgrading. Nootka has 2 music teachers. Being a 'choice' school, we have affluent parents who are able to arrange for their children to be transported to our school. These affluent parents are also in a more privileged position to have the time and ability to volunteer at our school. We have a great PAC with strong, talented, passionate parents. We were able to raise money and build a well thought-out, inclusive, diverse playground, within a few years. Even with the perks of our elementary school, I know of at least 2 families who have left or are leaving our community because of the decrease of quality of education in the Vancouver school district. One mother I spoke to yesterday told me she fears for the students who are left, especially in the more vulnerable communities. If 'better off' families transport their children to choice

schools, or enroll them in independent schools, or leave the district altogether, then who's left in the regular, neighbourhood catchment schools? The more vulnerable children, those from families who do not have the luxury of choices and advantages. Those parents will likely have greater obstacles to overcome to be able to volunteer at and support their children's schools, or to advocate for the rights and needs of their children.

Isn't this a disgrace?

Where are our Premier and Ministers of Education and Finance, and our Liberal MLAs? With their own dear children, in private schools or places of worship supported with millions of dollars paid by BC's taxpayers? Ok, another digression. What interest and priority are they making to our, individual and collective, dear children? To the future of Vancouver and our province? If they prefer to look at cold dollars versus the care for human beings, they need to consider the costs of the consequences of children growing up to be adults with all sort of childhood wounds. Unemployment, mental health needs... must I go on?

To end on a more positive note: I am so appreciative of all the people who have prioritized and been able to speak-up for how ridiculous, unfair, and short-sighted the province's cuts to public education are. And I am calling on British Columbians to unite to support public schools. One way of doing this is to check out and support: #BCEDinRED

I hope all this "noise" is being heard, loud and clear, by the Premier, Ministers of Education and Finance, Liberal MLAs— in fact, all MLAs and all British Columbians.

Thank you.

Vancouver School Board 2016/17 Preliminary Budget Proposals Public Consultation: Submission of Queen Mary Elementary School PAC
April 14, 2016

The Queen Mary Elementary School Parents Advisory Council opposes the proposed elimination of funding for the elementary band and strings program. For over thirty-seven years, the VSB Band and Strings Program has been one of the most successful music programs offered in the BC public education system.

This year alone, the VSB Band and Strings Program has over 1,400 elementary students enrolled from Grades 5 through 7 learning to play the Brass, Woodwinds, Strings and Percussion Instruments in a group setting. The students, through participation in the band and strings program, gain in four important areas:

- cognitive development (learning the language and symbols of music, and developing counting/math skills)
- physical co-ordination (psycho-motor development, small muscle and breathing skills)
- affective learning (connecting to, and expressing feelings and ideas)
- social development (teamwork, compromise and leadership)

In many cases the band and strings program offered through the schools is the only access many of our children have to formal music instruction. There are gifted and talented children in our district who rely on the public school system to provide them with an educational system that addresses all areas of learning and development, including a strong music program which we already have at a very insignificant cost.

Our high school music programs will be decimated if they do not a have pool of music educated elementary school children coming into their schools. The outcomes related to a music education that begins in grade 5 or better yet grade 4 versus grade 8 are significantly better.

The removal of the band and strings program would represent a tragic withdrawal of public funding for a valuable program that makes our district shine and supports a world class secondary program.

We have sent letters to the Ministry asking for the additional funding however it is also important that the Trustees who we are entrusting our children's education to, be good stewards of the vast resources that they have in this district and to ensure that those resources are managed properly so that programs like Band and Strings that cost so little, compared to the overall budget, are not cut.

We not only believe that the band and string program should not be cut but that the Grade 4's be allowed to participate again so as to increase the numbers of students to a more significant level and make the work load of the music teachers more manageable.

Some full time teachers have to travel between recess and lunch to cover 9 schools. If we had maintained the grade 4s the number of enrolled students would have been closer to 2,800 which could have provided the program with enough revenue to be almost self-sustaining.

There has been discussion around changing the optional program into a prep model. This has led to some incredibly challenging situations with organization, particularly with split classes in that there are multiple levels in one class as well as the need to supply all of those students with instruments. One school had a newsletter to ask for donations of band instruments and other teachers had to resort to borrowing unused instruments from other school programs. Some students end up having to share instruments which is not hygienic!

We believe that it is very important for all of us parents to advocate to you to keep the programs and to study the full effects and outcomes of the pilot schools as well as the effect that cutting one grade has on the optional programs, including the effects it has on secondary school programs in the future.

If the plan is for the school board to have a balanced budget in the next few years then we need to retain the programs, add back the grade 4s and increase the user fees until such a time where the programs can be funded properly again. If there is an elimination of the programs now and later there is funding, it would be very difficult to bring the programs back as teaching staff will then be committed to other jobs. We need to find a way to at least sustain what we have and to be creative as to how we can broaden it in the future.

We believe that we need to increase the user fees to sustain this program until the VSB can balance the budget through better utilization of it resources. We encourage a more substantial increase in user fees to $20/month provided any child with financial hardship can still participate in the program through a bursary or some other similar program made available through a variety of source and that the grade 4 children be added back in to provide a much larger base and therefore more revenue to support the program. This would make the teachers schedules much more manageable.

Many people spend $20.00 on a number of items without even thinking about it and would not object to a higher user fee. Last year parents provided information on how a bursary fund could be created for this program for those in need. Don't take this program away from the children as the barriers to professional training for many Vancouver School kids would be too high for them to do without the accessibility at school. Music lessons cost anywhere from $40 to $100 per hour which is significantly higher than what it costs to have our children taught music at school with their peers. In many cases the band and strings program offered through the schools is the only access many of our children have to formal music instruction so we would want to ensure a system is put in place so that all who want to participate can and those who do not want to are not forced to. Don't do this to the children of the VSB.

We calculate that if you go back to the Grade 4-7 program which had approximately 2,800 students in 2015 and if we assume 70% of these students are able to pay a user fee of $20 per month then the program could generate revenue of just under $400,000. The cost to the school board of running this program would be minimal and yet so impactful to our entire school district, both elementary and secondary schools.

For all these reasons mentioned above, we ask the VSB to reconsider its proposal to eliminate funding for the band and strings programs, and to consider other cost-saving/revenue generating measures as an alternative.

Thank you for your time and attention.
Queen Mary Elementary Parents Advisory Council

TRANS ALLIANCE SOCIETY

Advocating for Gender Minorities Since 2000

-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

Loss of Anti-Homophobia Mentor Position in VBE 2016/2017 Budget Moves Clock Backwards

Vancouver, 14 April, 2016

The **Trans Alliance Society** is deeply concerned that the Vancouver School District Board of Education's proposed 2016-2017 budget cuts include removing the anti-homophobia mentor, a key resource for trans as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer students. We urge the trustees to remember that removing this resource will increase the level of danger already faced by these already marginalized at-risk students.

The **Egale Canada Trust** reported in 2011 in The National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools that LGBTQ youth face greater prejudice and victimization in their schools and a correspondingly lower level of school connectedness than their non-LGBTQ peers and that the relationship between bullying and suicide is stronger for LGBT youth than for their non-LGBT peers.

Vancouver District Students' Council called on the BC government in 2012 to implement a province-wide sexual orientation and gender identity policy, instill values of equity and equality at the earliest ages and survey youth at the provincial level to locate direct solutions to direct problems;

The **Vancouver Board of Education** was the first school district in BC to adopt discrete Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity policy in 2004 and revised it in 2014 to provide explicitly protections for trans* students

On the recommendation of the City of Vancouver's LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee, the **City of Vancouver** passed a motion on the 5th of April supporting the BC Select Standing Committee

on Children and Youth's Report, Child and Youth Mental Health in British Columbia (Concrete Actions for Systemic Change) to the Minister of Education.

Recommendation 21 of The BC Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth final report "Child and Youth Hemtal Health in British Columbia: Concrete Actions for Systemic Change" urges legislature of British Columbia to:

> " Require school districts to support sexual and gender minority youth in schools through general and targeted programs to address child and youth mental health issues."

Whereas the Trans alliance Society understands that the Vancouver Board of Education is compelled to produce a balanced budget and that the funding provided by the ministry of education is in excess of $24 million less than requested, the Trans Alliance Society urges all parties to reconsider removing this crucial position and either find savings elsewhere or negotiate more funds from the Ministry of Education.

It is a sad irony that the province is causing the Vancouver School Board to cut the support system for LGBTQ students and staff in its schools, rendering it less effective at supporting the very students that recommendation 21 seeks to help.

The Trans Alliance Society opposes taking this key mental-health support resource away from the students in Vancouver and urges the Board of Education to continue to act proactively as the leader for Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity support for the province.

Morgane Oger
Chair, Trans Alliance Society
1-800-825-2405
www.transalliancesociety.org

General Gordon Elementary School

Parent Advisory Council Response to 2016/2017 Budget Proposals

Good evening! We would like to begin by introducing ourselves, Victoria Stephens and Promita Abraham, PAC Co-chairs and parents at General Gordon Elementary located in Kitsilano. We would like to thank the school board trustees and the VSB for allowing the public to provide their input on the operating budget proposals. We greatly appreciate the long hours that you have all been keeping over the past few days.

We as a school are currently going through a seismic upgrade. Our entire focus as a PAC has been to raise money as politely as possible for a community playground. We understand when the funds are scarce to provide a better quality playground. We do not understand when funds are scarce to provide the best education that our children deserve. All of us are used to having a budget to run our homes. We sacrifice luxuries so that our children have better opportunities. Education is not a luxury. It is unacceptable to live in a world class city like Vancouver and not have a world class education. The focus from the province should be to add to the system and not to subtract. It is the public school system that will reap the biggest benefits for British Columbia and not the funding of private schools by the tax payer.

After reading the revised budget, we are happy that some adjustments have been made. Most notably that the elimination of Fine Arts and Performing Arts Coordinator (E12.8) and Athletic Coordinator (E13) has been removed. We believe that education should be 'all rounded', placing as much emphasis on extra curricular activities as academic, enabling the student to find their passions, especially if they are unable to afford sports/drama clubs outside of school, without these positions a great deal of strain would be put on the school administration to organize both sporting and Fine Arts events.

We would now like to focus on the cuts that most concern us as parents.

E18 – Special Education Support Entitlements

A parent at our school wrote to us about her concerns with E18, although this has been revised to the reduction of 5.0 SSA's instead of 12.0. She is concerned that this cut will have an effect on the amount of support time that her daughter with special needs gets thus putting at risk her learning process which is already fragile due to her disability. She writes, 'I think; this goes for all parents who have a child with special needs who depend so much on the supports already in place and that actually need more resources to have a real access to their education. There are many realities that power point presentations and reports cannot explain and Principals struggle with it trying to provide the best they can for all these students'. Further more she is concerned that there are so many students that do not have a designation and still need support. She believes that these students continue to be left at the margins.

General Gordon Elementary School

E19 – Elementary Non-Enrolling Staffing

It is concerning that the non-enrolling staff positions are going to be cut back. It is recommended that the non-enrolling teaching staff at elementary schools be reduced by 5.0, this is an improvement from the original budget proposal which stated 11.36, but we believe that this will have a negative impact on the amount of school librarians we have in our school district. The school libraries play an integral part in our children's education in enhancing their passion for literature and learning.

E15 – Secondary Teacher Staffing

We are concerned about the impact E15 will have on our students and teachers. The proposal to eliminate class size limits and the reduction of 22.0 FTE teaching staff is alarming. Teachers and parents want smaller classes, not bigger, so all students can get the individual attention they need.

E12.3 – Learning Technology Teacher Mentors

British Columbia is being praised around the world on its new exciting and innovative curriculum. We wonder how these proposed cuts are going to affect the new curriculum being rolled out. The current emphasis on coding makes it imperative that teachers are familiar with all the technology required to teach the class.

E12.9 – Literacy/Early Intervention Teacher Consultant

As per our understanding of the budget proposals, this position seems to be the sole resource for Literacy initiatives. We feel strongly that in a country of immigrants, the earlier the learning process is strengthened, the better prepared children are for school. This might even save time and money in the long run.

E12.10 – Anti-Racism/Anti-Homophobia Teacher Mentors

With new residents coming in from different parts of the world where they are not exposed to different races and a conservative approach to homosexuality, we need to ensure that students who have grown up with pre-conceived notions are given the right tools to change their outlook. This is only possible with a trained teacher mentor in place. According to the budget proposal, there are structures, programs and practices that are in place and might somewhat assist in lessening the impact of the reduction. We feel strongly that the mentors need to be there to see it through.

Education is a right because of the impact it has on our society. We emphasize the fact that our children should not be deprived of the opportunity to reach their full potential. The new budget needs to stop the cuts and include new funding for schools.

Thank you!

Good evening Trustees, Senior Management and Stakeholders,

My name is Andrea Sinclair and I am the PAC Chair at Charles Dickens Elementary, both Main and Annex sites. On behalf of our PAC and our parent community, I appreciate this opportunity to speak to you today.

We believe 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.

We believe the Government has systematically de-prioritized public education; the Government is NOT meeting needs of students, first and foremost.

We believe the budget shortfall is a direct result of chronic underfunding and the downloading of costs to school boards by this Government, who has repeatedly rejected the recommendations of its own Standing Committee and the priorities of citizens who have supported increasing funding to public education. Ministry of Education funding has fallen by 11% since 2002; the percentage of nominal GDP spent on education has also decreased since 2002.

We believe schools are the foundational cornerstone of their respective communities; we will not be forced into 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 call for UNITY across the district; together we must work to show we will not tolerate the divisiveness this creates at every level in our public education system.

We believe it's time for personal politics to be set aside; we must ALL work together, strategically and creatively, for the best interests of Vancouver school children, now and for the future.

We are extremely concerned that this budget shortfall will have highly detrimental and long-lasting affects to services and programs for our children; we are at our tipping point and these cuts – which may be permanent - serve to de-value the quality of public education delivered in

Vancouver. This budget has a significant impact to ALL students across the district; it will affect every family and will be felt for years to come.

We are gravely concerned that the core competencies of the revised curriculum, with its emphasis on hands-on, inquiry-based and personalized learning, are in great jeopardy; faced with district-wide cuts and reductions in programs, resources and staff, compounded by school closures and the unreasonable demand for 95% capacity, public-school children may no longer have sufficient space and/or resources to adequately support the full range of their educational needs.

We are painfully concerned this budget will add to already high and continued pressure on parents and PACs to further fundraise to help offset the cuts and shortfalls faced by students and teachers on the front lines. This budget further reinforces the existing socioeconomic inequality between schools and PACs; we cannot be divisive, we must UNITE.

We desire for all groups to work together as a UNITED front and target our energies and our efforts where the issue originates – with the lack of adequate funding from the government. **BC ED is in the RED**. Politics aside, WE must ALL work together, strategically and creatively, for the best interests of public education school children, now and for the future.

We hope this depth of public concern will demonstrate VERY LOUDLY to the government that parents are agitated, angry and will not stop fighting for their children.

We know more and more parents are raising the alarm and advocating for quality public education by continuing to pressure the government to keep the public education system from failing.

CHANGE IS INEVITABLE – GROWTH IS OPTIONAL.

Thank you for your time and your generous listening.

The Vancouver School Board must continue to provide the bridge between Korean-speaking parents and their children's schools. Eliminating the Korean Multicultural Workers in Vancouver public schools means that the VSB fails to recognize the Korean parents as a significant part of the school system and our community. Our rights are just as important as any other parent. We deserve to be informed of essential information in regards to our children and their schools.

My children, as fifth grade and third grade students, moved to Vancouver four years ago with me. Prior to our immigration to Canada, the three of us lived in China for five years. My children studied in China as international students. My experience of living in China gave me the confidence to thrive in Vancouver. However, I realized very soon that I was not yet prepared to face many challenges of living in Vancouver. It was very difficult to get adjusted to an entirely different culture especially as a sole parent living away from my husband, relatives, and friends. My children initially struggled to get adjusted to their new life in Vancouver, and their struggles broke my heart. I began suffering with panic disorder, which I am still coping with, and I was unable to sleep at night without taking medication. My children and I learned to accept a new culture, new language, and a completely different school system than the ones in China and Korea.

During this difficult time, the Korean Multicultural Workers of the Vancouver School Board offered tremendous help and support by counselling me and my children, and organizing meetings for all the Korean parents in my children's school. In particular, a Korean Multicultural Worker assigned to our family went above and beyond her job to help us. She was not only attentive to my family's needs, but she also listened to my concerns and contacted me personally to let me know that my students were doing well at their school. She assured that everything was going to work out well, and her kindness gave me strength and confidence.

In addition, Korean Multicultural Workers in my children's schools act as cultural consultants, interpreters, and counsellors in our native language. They provide professional help in the most caring and professional manner. Korean Multicultural Workers communicate with the teachers and administrators, give advice on my children's academic and social adjustment in a timely fashion, encourage me to actively participate in my children's education, and connect me to various programs in my community.

Limiting the Korean Multicultural Workers' roles in the Vancouver public schools would be an unjust decision for the Korean parents. Many of us have difficulty communicating freely in English, and we lack the experience of dealing with the Canadian school system, which is widely different than the Korean school system. I strongly believe that all parents must be given equal rights.

Even after successfully receiving the Permanent Residency and living in Canada for four years, we are still in the process of learning about Vancouver and the school system. I have been continuing to receive help from the Korean Multicultural Workers provided by the Vancouver School Board. Many other Korean parents, like me, are in critical need of their help. Our security and wellness does not only affect our own children, but the entire student body. I truly hope that the Vancouver School Board continues to improve our community by not only providing the Korean Multicultural Worker's services, but further increasing their work.

Address to Vancouver School Board Meeting
Committee of the Whole
Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 5:00 pm
Room 114 (Boardroom), VSB Education Centre
1580 West Broadway, Vancouver BC

Mr. Chair, Honored Trustees, Friends and Colleagues

I appear before you with great respect and appreciation for your service to the City of Vancouver, to the Vancouver School District, and to the students of this city.

My name is Sean Bickerton. I appear before you as the BC Director of the Canadian Music Centre and as a member of the Arts & Culture Policy Council for the City of Vancouver.

My entire life has been made possible by music. Growing up in a very isolated, rural area, music was literally a lifeline for me. It opened up vast new worlds to me, and playing in orchestra and band introduced me to kids like myself that wanted to be part of something bigger. We were thrilled to perform great works of music written by the masters centuries earlier, powerful echoes of the Enlightenment that still remains the very basis of modern education today.

A life dedicated to music is what made it possible for a kid from Cloverdale like me to go to New York and become a Vice President of Columbia Artists Management; to produce North American tours for some of the great European orchestras; to manage Grammy Award-winning performing artists; to become the BC Director of the Canadian Music Centre today.

Music is a powerful force that changes lives.

In fact scientists are learning that music sensitivity is more fundamental to the human brain than speech perception, that our ability to perceive and make music predates speech itself. Music is fundamental in fact to our very sense of being human. And there is no question that music is essential to human creativity.

But the arguments in favour of music education are well known to you. I do not intend to tread over that well-traveled ground again.

You yourselves were already so convinced of these and many other well-established arguments in support of music education just one year ago that you committed to finding a sustainable solution so we would not again face this awful situation we are now addressing ever again.

Yet, as the Coalition for Music Education in BC put it: "regardless of advocacy, values, research, curriculum, and policy," we are presented with the assertion that the Vancouver School Board cannot afford to fund music education in elementary schools.

So we're not really here talking about music or music education in any case.

We're here to talk about money.

So, let's agree first that BC underfunds education. This is true. We are the wealthiest province in the country and yet we spend less per capita than any other but one province. This is shameful.

But what is also true is that other school boards manage to fund music programs for elementary school students with the same per capita resources that Vancouver receives.

It's obvious that you are caught in a hard place, stuck between opposing forces, forced to make hard choices you would prefer not to.

But that is why you were elected. I have some sense of how difficult your roles are, but you won those seats, and you now must be the adults in the room. No one else can make the hard choices you need to make. It falls to you. You have to make this work on behalf of all of us. And you won't win the argument simply by pointing fingers, no matter how much right is on your side.

So I urge you to honour the trust that has been placed in you as Trustees, and make the difficult compromises with each other that we need you to make in order to ensure that Vancouver students get not just as good as an education as everyone else, but the best education possible in this province. We should be the exemplar. Please do what's right and necessary to ensure that worthy goal.

140,000 years ago, homo sapiens, our species, teetered on the brink of extinction. Climate change had turned the lush savannas of central Africa into desert, pushing the last 600 homo sapiens still alive onto a narrow band of habitat along the shores of our original homeland.

Struggling to feed themselves in an unfamiliar landscape, those first modern humans survived by their wits, developing the inventiveness and creativity that now define us as the most adaptable species in the world.

New tools were needed to gather and catch the strange foods and new technologies necessary to cook and preserve them.

Thousands of years of drought forced those earliest humans to change, and as a result, our ancestors emerged 60,000 years ago stronger and more resilient, armed with new technology and most importantly, the ability to use art to create symbols, thereby storing information outside of the human brain for the very first time in history.

It was the birth of a new type of human culture, more complex but one that through art could be passed on from generation to generation.

Ultimately, what allowed homo sapiens to endure where other hominids died out was that most valuable, mysterious and uniquely human of all inventions – culture.

No matter what challenges we have faced throughout history, we have always found a way of adapting. That way is culture, and it is in that very creativity – born out of a desperate struggle to survive – that we find cause for cautious optimism even today with all of its challenges.

Oft-maligned, frequently misunderstood, Culture is best defined as "our society's storehouse of complex ways of thinking and perceiving, and we pass it onto our children as surely as we pass on our genes."[1]

Culture, then, is our only hope of surviving the climactic changes we ourselves have set in motion, our only way of managing and adapting to the resulting epochal social change taking place in the world around us, and our only way of passing down the shared heritage of thousands of years of knowledge that the next generation will need in order to thrive in this new environment.

This is why culture matters. And governments fail to support it at the peril of their own existence.

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[1] NOVA 'Becoming Human' (PBS)

April 14th, 2016 by Connie Baechler Concerned Parent, Coach
VSB Graduate, Tax Payer

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Why sport is fundamental to a child's education

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the proposed VSB budget cuts. I am speaking as a concerned parent, a volunteer coach, a graduate of the VSB school system, and a taxpayer. Since registering to speak to the Committee, I am aware of the amendments to the proposed budget cuts. However, I want to be sure you know how alarmed many of us are at the initial proposal. Until you finalize the budget on April 28th, it is important you have community input.

You are stewards of our education system – that is a huge responsibility. You are expected to do what I deem an impossible job – provide a world class education system while cutting over $24 million from the upcoming year's budget.

In the short time I have I shall address the need to keep the VSB Athletic Coordinator position.

I am a huge proponent of school sports. It is often a child's first exposure to a specific sport; it can open their doors to more competition in a particular sport, and as importantly, to a lifetime of enjoyment and healthy living.

One of my high school PE teachers was instrumental in my involvement in team sports and ultimately who I evolved into because she taught me about hard work and setting goals from an early age.

Here is what I think about when I hear you were considering eliminating the Athletic Coordinator position:

1) I am thinking of the single parent. To bring perspective, my mother was a single working parent and I know how important it was for me to stay busy and active after school – to keep me from finding trouble. Trouble was tempting to join, but my sports were more important. I stayed out of trouble and graduated from high school and went on to do my Commerce Degree at UBC. I've done OK for myself and I know in my heart that it was the sport activities at school that kept me on track. I am also keenly aware that my mental well-being is correlated to maintaining an active lifestyle to this day.

2) I am thinking of those families without financial means to pursue external clubs/teams. Those children will lose the opportunity to be part of a team, to learn all the lessons that go with working hard, participating, winning and losing.

3) I am thinking of the rise in obesity in children and what I see as obvious health reasons to teach a child about being active – the cost is enormous in terms of physical, emotional, mental, and social impact… It is clear we need greater emphasis on PREVENTION of obesity. The focus should be on keeping kids healthy through active lifestyles as well as making healthier food choices.

April 14th, 2016 by Connie Baechler Concerned Parent, Coach
VSB Graduate, Tax Payer

Most adolescents do not outgrow obesity and in fact, many continue to gain excess weight. If current trends continue, by 2040, up to 70% of adults aged 40 years will be either overweight or obese. Adults who have unhealthy weights are at increased risk of heart disease, cancer, strokes and type 2 diabetes. (Note: these statistics are from the childhood obesity foundation) The toll in dollars cost and lives lost is a call for action. Obesity is difficult to reverse and public health measures must include effective prevention beginning in childhood as well as treatment.

4) I am thinking of the rise in myopia in children. The condition of the eye known as near-sightedness is on a rapid rise in the developed world. There are many theories to why this is, and environmental factors are likely important. Research has shown that people, especially children, who spend more time doing physical activity and outdoor activity have lower rates of myopia. As my eye doctor will tell you, the solution for reducing the risk is to go play outside (ie. play sports). Do we need to wait 10 or 20 more years to analyze what is likely an obvious factor – children's eyesight is deteriorating while their screen time is increasing?

5) I am thinking of a very shy girl that has transformed her self-confidence due to sport. When this young girl laces up her runners to run a cross country race, her confidence blooms. She transforms from a quiet, shy person. She has found something she is good at and she enjoys working to improve herself. It has been a game-changer for this young person. How many children might lose the opportunity to find something they shine at if we take away the opportunities to play sports amongst our fellow students and schools?

6) I am thinking about the cost benefit analysis done by fellow parent, Julee Kaye. To paraphrase, she presents the case that if the VSB were to lose 11 students to private schools, they would lose the equivalent of Ministry funding to support the Athletic Coordinator position. What percentage of the thousands of students currently enjoying VSB athletic programs might withdraw from VSB schools if the district program were cut?

In conclusion I ask you - what are you thinking about when stewarding Vancouver's public education system for the future? Please consider these points.

I am a taxpayer in this great city and province. I am outraged at the size of the budget cut and will share this with our MLA.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Connie Baechler
Parent of 2 daughters at École Jules Quesnel and soon Kitsilano Secondary

Good Evening dear Trustees and community members

My name is Neha.

Once again it is proposed that a full time positon of South Asian Multicultural Liaison workers be cut, which is not acceptable to our community. I am here to request to not to cut this vital link of our families with our children's schools.

I am also advocating tonight on behalf of two other mothers whose children are in Vancouver elementary schools. They would like to be here but one mother has 3 daughters and her youngest is only 2 years old, and the other mother has 2 children: 5 and 7 year old.

Both of these families are rather new in this country and cannot reach here easily by public transport. Both the families are getting support from the multicultural worker.

This evening I have 2 important issues to raise.

First: If the proposed cut goes through for the Multicultural worker of our community, the entire district will be served by the remaining 2 male workers. We need to have a full time female worker as well.

In our culture, mostly women are responsible for the upbringing of their children. They meet their children physical, emotional and mental needs.

It is a reality that women share issues and problems with women better. It is more so in South Asian cultures where females are taught and are expected to maintain clear emotional and physical boundaries.

In Conservative South Asian families, women do not make even eye contact with men. Their families permit them to work with women only, so as a result such families will not get support if a female worker is not available.

Mental health issues in our community are rising. There is a big stigma attached to this in our culture and again women first seek help from women.

Traditionally South Asian households are male dominated where father, brother or husband take decisions for the female members of the family. Many families condition women in such a way that they start to believe they are not that important. Domestic violence and abuse is very widespread and the children witness all that. Most of the women remain quiet and children undergo a lot of trauma as they love their mother the most.

I came here on marriage basis. I had good education in India, but I was not allowed to work by my in laws after coming here. I was not allowed to drive a car. I started my life here an obedient and dutiful wife and daughter-in-law. I was in a very difficult and abusive relationship. After having my son, my life was mainly my son's school and my home. During this time, I came to know the South Asian Multicultural worker at school and started sharing my and my son's issues with her.

After 10 years in this extremely difficult relationship, finally one day I was forced to leave my home on a snowy morning with no money at all and no belongings. I brought my son to school, dropped him off in

his class and came to Multicultural Worker at school. I knew that door was wide open for me and thus started a new journey for me and my son.

My son had developed terrible emotional problems and behavior problems in these years. There were complaints from the teachers. He started lying for no reason, became attention seeking. His health was seriously affected as he put on a lot of weight. I was determined to change all that. Multicultural worker helped me immensely, she connected me to other resources. I started counselling for me and my son. The story goes on and on but I am a very independent person now and taking good care of my son. All these years my son and I have got tremendous support from this person. My son now feels very comfortable discussing his problems with Multicultural worker independently. Whenever I have any issue even now, she is the first person I phone.

I could share sensitive family issues with this worker because she is a woman.

I request you to keep this cultural sensitivity in mind in your decision making. It will be a great disservice to our community if our community cannot access the services of a female multicultural worker at schools. And please keep this position full time as a lot of intervention is needed in elementary years.

Second big issue in my mind is that of numbers of students in schools from South Asian community.

The student enrolment is declining but the number of South Asian students is fairly high as compared to many other language groups. Needless to say that our community has many issues. I do not understand the reasoning behind this cut. Based on the numbers that you have given in the budget, next year number of students per South Asian worker will be about 1300 each. Could you please at numbers and also look at the ratio again for all the language groups and make a fair decision. Please also keep in mind the issues of our community.

A big issue in our community is of Drug and Gang Violence. Surrey has a shooting every 3 or 4 days on average and majority of these shootings involve South Asians. The city is having to spend so much more money in terms of extra policing and other workers in schools and community. It is clearly connected to lack of good parenting. Our parents like all parents want to do the best for their children. Many of them do not have education and they are too busy working. They do not have modern day parenting skills. They believe in providing physical comforts to their children and think that this will make their children happy. They do not speak English and do not connect with school.

In the light of all above I hope you will retain this position as is.

Thank you.

Getting Schooled on Special Needs in a World Class Education System

Andréa Coutu
Andréa Coutu, MBA is a business consultant, post-secondary instructor and advocate for preserving and strengthening BC's world class public education system. Find her online at www.consultantjournal.com and @andrea_coutu.

Good evening.

My name is Andréa Coutu and I am the mother of two amazing, gifted kids who happen to have special needs. I care about the entire education system but I looked at the fantastic speaker list and I think you need to hear what it's like on the ground for children with special needs.

I cannot hope to speak for other families. I cannot speak for them. But I can be here for them. I can be here to give a voice to what I have heard and seen. My kids have the support they need right now, but I had to advocate long and hard and it was a devastating process.

And so I am here. I am here for all the kids who are not receiving what they need at school, who are having their health and safety and learning compromised by the chronic underfunding of the BC public education system.

I am here for every child who has refused to go to school. For every child who has bolted or hidden in the basement or bushes. For every child who has self harmed because school is too hard. I am here for every family waiting for a consult at Children's at 4 am because of school.

I am here for every child who has been sent home because there wasn't enough support. For every child who can't return to school until there is an aide. For every child waiting months for an OT or speech path at school.

I am here for all the kids "failing" and unable to read or write because the Province fails them.

I am here for every parent who has had their work and income disrupted.

I am here for the very fragile children on the P1 and CAPE and other special units at Children's – all the families who've been told their child wouldn't be so ill if they'd had more support at school.

I am here for anyone whose child is going to lose those precious 2 hours of home instruction support each week.

I am here for all the parents who wait for that call from the school.

I am here as a survivor of an inner city school and for all those fragile families in the Northeast corner of this city, where 70% of children live in poverty. I am here for them and to let you know that some managerial accounting measure that says classrooms are empty has overlooked the special needs supports in those "empty" rooms.

I am here for every child who could only hold on, because of fine arts, their band class, their gifted education, learning technology or sports team.

I am here for every child who has been bullied, called racial slurs, called homophobic slurs. For every kid who has had their face ground into the pavement.

I am here for every child who did not make it through the first weeks of school without being assaulted. For every parent who has arrived at a school to find their child battered and bruised when they needed an aide. I am here for every parent who has had to up end their entire life to change their child's school and lose their child care. Twice.

I am here for every parent who has been unsure if their child would live through the next day, the next week, the next month, because they need more support at school.

I am here. And many parents are not. Because the day to day existence of dealing with chronic underfunding is excruciating. Many parents cannot get away from work to be here. Some hate public speaking. Still others have been forced out of the system. Others tell me they are too terrified to be singled out as "THAT PARENT". Others fear the stigma.

But they are hurting. They approach me, in the corners of the school grounds or through Facebook. And they tell me their stories.

We can do better as a society. We can adhere to the standards set out by the Moore case and see that special education is not a luxury. We can recognize that the Supreme Court reminds us of our duty to provide support to the point of undue hardship. We can stop shifting an unfair share of cuts to children with special needs – these children bear all the cuts to programs and then again when their programs are cut.

If you cannot bear to put special education first because cuts elsewhere will rip all the meaning and beauty out of this fragile system, then I must ask you not to pass the budget.

Just last week, someone who does not know my story, had the audacity to tell me not to complain, because Vancouver has a world class system.

And so, because I am here... and I have a voice and this platform... I ask you:

Whose world?

Whose class?

Thank you for your time.

Andréa Coutu

Address to the VSB 4/14/2016

Kim Werker
Queen Elizabeth Annex School PAC

Thank you, Trustees and staff, for being here for another late night of hearing us out.

I'm new to this, as the parent of a kindergartener. At first, I felt timid about approaching you, but eventually I decided to embrace my lack of experience as an asset. Perhaps my not-knowing-any-better can help unearth some possibilities where we now see so few.

I attended the meeting here last night, and though I couldn't stay until the end, I imagine the speakers I heard provided a fair representation of the arguments you've been hearing all week. To be honest, I left the meeting feeling a bit unsettled, because everything I'd want to say about the proposed cuts has surely already been said.

So I did what we all do when we feel a bit trapped by circumstance: I tried to shift my perspective. When I did so, here's where I ended up:

You are in an impossible position. If you pass this budget, the children, families, communities and future of our city will suffer. If you reject this budget, it's quite possible that you'll not only suffer personally, but also that the very cuts you'd be rejecting would be implemented by the province anyway.

Rock, meet hard place.

And so I thought some more, because impossible situations are the kinds of situations that might just lead to change.

Many speakers have mentioned that you, as Trustees, did not ask to be placed in this situation. I think they mean that you are not responsible for the underfunding you must contend with, and that's correct. But you did choose – in fact, you all campaigned hard – to be in this position. No matter your politics or your feelings about this particular budget, you are all here because you're dedicated to providing the children of our city with the best possible education.

The kind of funding shortfall we're facing this year did not come unexpected, out of the blue. The blinding neon writing has been on the wall for more than a decade. When you took on the very important role of "building and maintaining a school system that reflects local priorities, values and expectations"* you knew that our local values and expectations do not necessarily mesh with those of the government that determines our funding.

I am not at all in favour of putting a bandaid on our funding situation by capitalizing on the land our schools sit on, or by relying on parent groups to fundraise for essential materials and programming.

At our small annex school, the proposed 20% cut to the School Flex Budget combined with the freezing of this year's flex budget will result in the downloading of essential costs to our PAC. Without PAC funding, next year our school will be without assemblies, new technology, PE equipment, and even math textbooks. Though our PAC will probably be able to pick up the slack, some PACs will not. Inequality of access is not okay.

Another cut that will hit small schools particularly hard is that to non-enrolling resource teachers. Our school administrator will lose a half day of resource instruction, leaving her with only 4 1/2 days to provide early

administrator will lose a half-day of resource instruction, leaving her with only 1 1/2 days to provide early literacy interventions to a sizeable number of children at our school.

But here's the thing. The *real* issue here is not whether some schools should be sacrificed for the greater good of our district, nor whether we think it's acceptable for PACs to pay for essential programs and materials, but why the government thinks it's okay that in a time of economic prosperity, it should compel drastic sacrifice of education at all.

This is a power struggle, but the struggle is not between us, the parents and citizens of Vancouver, and you, our elected Trustees. For too long, both of our groups have been on the weaker end of a powerful government that has been squeezing us and denying us the resources we need to run a school system that educates our children and prepares them to be successful, well-adjusted, productive members of our society.

So I'm left wondering: If you are in an impossible position, and we are in an impossible position, can we work together in some way to reject the impossibility? Can we work together to shift the balance of power so that we no longer have to endure the squeezing and degradation of resources that comes to us from on high?

How might we do that? How might we show the provincial government that we reject their impossible situation?

Surely, my sitting here red in the face and impassioned isn't a particularly compelling story. No journalist will see me as anything other than a cliché. A local mom infuriated over education cuts.

But you? You Trustees do have power that I don't have. We parents should expect you to stand up, as a board, arm in arm, and declare to your community, your constituents, and the media that this funding situation is *wrong*. We should expect you express very clearly that you cannot provide – with the funding you're given – adequate education to all of our city's students. We should expect you to join together with the parents and citizens of this city – who will back you up – when you declare that this impossible situation is not an *acceptable* situation.

Having witnessed the outpouring of advocacy from parents over the last couple of weeks, I'm confident that we can do our part to organize, to grow our numbers, to create a large and loud movement the government will be unable to ignore.

Would you, Trustees, be willing to put aside any ideological differences you might have with each other to stand arm in arm with us? To tell the government that we should not be forced to make drastic sacrifices in a time of prosperity? That we refuse to make short-sighted decisions that will only make it harder and worse for students, families, teachers, administrators and Trustees in the future?

Can we, together, unite so that this impossible situation won't seem so impossible anymore?

I hope we can. Because if we don't, we'll be taking away quite a lot of possibility from our children.

Thank you.

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* Quoted from http://www.bcsta.org/what_trustees_do.