



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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2009 August 11

Honourable Mary Polak
Minister of Children and Family Development
and Minister Responsible for Child Care
PO BOX 9057 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Polak:

On behalf of the Vancouver Board of Education, I wish to express our support for the children requiring extra resources at the Phil Bouvier Family Centre in the Strathcona neighbourhood of east Vancouver. The cut to enrichment funding for additional staff who work with children with special needs in the child care centre is of deep concern.

We are aware that a child care operating grant is provided to the Phil Bouvier Family Centre, as it is to all other licensed child care facilities and parents do receive a provincial subsidy to assist them with child care fees, just as low income families are eligible to receive all across British Columbia.

Our concern is that the children in the Strathcona neighbourhood have particular challenges stemming from their inner city location and as such, their needs are above and beyond the typical funding allocated to a child care program.

As measured by the Early Development Instrument of the Human Early Learning Partnership research at UBC, an alarming **75%** of children entering Kindergarten in the area are vulnerable on one or more of the five rating scales
(http://ecdportal.help.ubc.ca/pubMaps/BC/SchoolDistrict/sd39_Vancouver/EDI/SD39_Vancouver_W12.pdf).

If children are not supported in their early years, it is a far more serious and expensive issue for them and their families as well as for school districts, to offer remedial services in later years. As demonstrated by Dr. Clyde Hertzman at UBC, there is a direct relationship between children's vulnerability on entering Kindergarten and them failing to pass the Foundation Skills Assessment testing in grade four
(<http://ecdportal.help.ubc.ca/pubMaps/BC/Provincial/Clyde's%20Presentation/MakeConnections.ppt>).

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We urge you to reinstate enrichment funding for the Phil Bouvier Family Centre, and to ensure that children with special needs across the City of Vancouver and the province have their needs adequately met to ensure they reach their full potential.

Sincerely,



Patti Bacchus
Chairperson

cc: Trustees
Laurie Anderson, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Brenda Ng, Secretary-Treasurer
