



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

1580 West Broadway

Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

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May 4, 2009

The Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Education and Minister Responsible for
Early Learning and Literacy and Deputy Premier
PO Box 9056 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Bond:

The Vancouver Board of Education approved a "Needs" budget on April 30 (copy attached) which we are submitting with our "compliance" operating budget for 2009/10.

As you know, school districts have had to cut millions of dollars in staffing and resources in order to submit balanced budgets. These cuts are largely as a result of rising costs — including salary increments, increases in employee benefit costs and inflation on goods and services, which are not funded by the Province. In addition, school districts are faced with negative financial impacts due to declining enrolment, as the per-pupil-funding formula reduces funding for fixed costs.

In Vancouver, since 2001 we have implemented over \$40 million in cuts to staffing and resources owing to funding shortfalls.

In passing our compliance budget last week, including \$7.12 million in spending reductions, several trustees spoke passionately about the need to reinvest in public education and stop the trend of underfunding school districts, which results in painful cuts and makes it increasingly difficult to meet the learning needs of all students.

Therefore the board, in its "Needs" budget, requests a minimum reinvestment of \$40 million in additional operating funding a year in order to restore actual funding levels to 2001. We believe this is a modest request, given the several years of spending cuts prior to 2001.

Board of School Trustees:

Patti Bacchus - Chairperson

Jane Bouey - Vice-Chairperson

Allan Blakey Ken Clement Ken Denike

Carol Gibson Sharon Gregson Mike Lombardi

Allan Wong

Our Needs budget outlines our priorities for reinvestment. We look forward to future dialogue about how we can support and foster success for every student in safe, up-to-date schools with the staffing and resources in place to fully prepare today's students for tomorrow's challenges.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider the priorities in our Needs Budget.

Sincerely,



Patti Bacchus
Chairperson

cc: Trustees
Chris Kelly, Superintendent of Schools
Brenda Ng, Secretary-Treasurer

2009/10 NEEDS BUDGET BYLAW

A Bylaw of THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 39 (Vancouver) (called the "Board") to adopt the Needs Budget of the Board for the fiscal year 2009/10 pursuant to section 85(1) of the School Act, R.S.B.C., 1996, c. 412 as amended from time to time (called the "Act").

1. This bylaw may be cited as School District No. 39 (Vancouver) Needs Budget Bylaw for fiscal year 2009/10.
2. The attached Schedule "1" showing the estimated revenue and expenditure for the 2009/10 fiscal year and the total budget bylaw amount of **\$524,336,194** for the 2009/10 fiscal year was prepared to restore education services in Vancouver to the 2001/02 levels.
3. Schedule "1" is adopted as the Needs Budget of the Board for the fiscal year 2009/10.

READ A FIRST TIME THE 30th DAY OF APRIL, 2009;

READ A SECOND TIME THE 30th DAY OF APRIL, 2009;

READ A THIRD TIME, PASSED AND ADOPTED THE 30th DAY OF APRIL, 2009.



Chairperson of the Board



Secretary Treasurer

I HEREBY CERTIFY this to be a true original of School District No. 39 (Vancouver) Needs Budget Bylaw 2009/10, adopted by the Board the 30th day of April, 2009.



Secretary Treasurer

2009/2010 PRELIMINARY OPERATING BUDGET

	<u>Base Budget</u>	<u>Budget Proposal</u>	<u>Compliance Budget</u>	<u>Needs Budget</u>
Revenue	477,379,703	-	477,379,703	477,379,703
Minimum Additional MOE Funding Required				40,000,000
Total Revenue	<u>477,379,703</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>477,379,703</u>	<u>517,379,703</u>
Expense	486,638,043	(3,969,082)	482,668,961	482,668,961
Minimum Additional Reinvestment in Vancouver Schools				40,000,000
Total Expense	<u>486,638,043</u>	<u>(3,969,082)</u>	<u>482,668,961</u>	<u>522,668,961</u>
NET REVENUE (EXPENSE)	(9,258,340)	3,969,082	(5,289,258)	(5,289,258)
Interfund Transfers	(1,233,059)	8,372	(1,224,687)	(1,224,687)
Reduction of Unfunded Liability	<u>(885,092)</u>	<u>442,546</u>	<u>(442,546)</u>	<u>(442,546)</u>
	(11,376,491)	4,420,000	(6,956,491)	(6,956,491)
Budgeted Prior Year Operating Surplus Appropriation	4,256,491	2,700,000	6,956,491	6,956,491
BUDGETED BALANCE	<u>(7,120,000)</u>	<u>7,120,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
BUDGET BYLAW AMOUNT				
Total Expense	486,638,043	(3,969,082)	482,668,961	522,668,961
Interfund Transfers	1,233,059	(8,372)	1,224,687	1,224,687
Reduction of Unfunded Liability	885,092	(442,546)	442,546	442,546
TOTAL BUDGET BYLAW AMOUNT	<u>488,756,194</u>	<u>(4,420,000)</u>	<u>484,336,194</u>	<u>524,336,194</u>

✓SB

April 30, 2009

The Vancouver Board of Education's 2009/2010 Needs Budget: A reinvestment in Vancouver schools

The Vancouver School District's funding situation

While provincial politicians claim K-12 per-student funding is at its highest level ever, school districts are faced with costs — many of which are not provincially funded — that are rising at a higher rate than funding is increasing. Those unfunded rising costs, combined with the impact of slightly declining enrolment, have forced the Vancouver board to make approximately \$40 million in spending cuts since 2001/02.

The board recognizes these are challenging economic times but we also know the needs of Vancouver's diverse and complex school population are growing and that education is more critical to individual and community success than ever. We simply can't afford not to invest in our students.

While our public school system is recognized as being among the best in the world — with hundreds of students coming each year to pay for the privilege of participating in our International Student program — we are still not doing as much as we need to be doing for too many of our students.

We also know our teachers and staff work in increasingly difficult conditions, with increased class sizes and fewer resources available to help them. Workload pressure is making it harder for individuals to do their work and constant financial pressures make it more challenging for the board to plan effectively and support staff in carrying out initiatives to improve educational outcomes for all students.

The board believes we need to reverse the trend of eroding school budgets and forcing continued cuts to staffing and resources and start making a real investment in our children's — and our society's — future.

The 2009/2010 "Needs Budget"

As the Vancouver Board of Education worked through its annual budget consultation process in order to finalize a balanced operating budget within the provincially allocated funding, it also developed the following "Needs Budget".

The Needs Budget outlines what we believe to be our minimal funding requirements and our priorities for allocating that funding.

"Education is the best economic development and health promotion program ever invented. In tight economic times, it is only smart to maintain and expand educational investments." – 2009 BC Speech From the Throne.

The Board agrees with the government's throne speech statement, and that statement is consistent with the messages we received in the numerous stakeholder and public budget submissions that were made to the board during the budget process. Through those submissions, we've heard that not only will further cuts erode the district's ability to meet learning needs, cumulative years of cuts have made that job increasingly difficult and too many students are at risk of not succeeding, despite the best efforts of staff.

With this document, the board requests that its annual operating funding allocation be restored to equivalent 2001/02 levels, adjusted for enrolment changes, while recognizing there have been significant spending reductions in the decade prior to 2001/02. To restore real funding to 2001/02, the Vancouver school district needs at least an additional \$40 million annual operating funding investment.

Budget reductions implemented by the board since 2002/03:

- 2002/03: \$25.5 million
- 2003/04: \$ 4.4 million
- 2004/05: \$ 8.1 million
- 2005/06: \$6.8 million increase
- 2006/07: \$3.4 million
- 2007/08: \$5.8 million
- 2008/09: \$4.35 increase*
- 2009/10: \$7.12 million

Net total reductions: \$43.17

* In February 2008, a funding shortfall of \$3.7 million was projected for 2008/2009. However, after carrying forward the 2007/2008 surplus of \$3.54 million, the remaining shortfall was estimated to be \$0.16 million. It was noted, however, that this projection did not include potential additional Distance Learning (DL) revenue for Feb and May. In March, 2008, based on the preliminary funding announcement by the province, this shortfall was revised to a \$0.22 million surplus. In June 2008, additional revenue was reported for DL for February and May, plus additional funding that came in for the Adult Educators Collective Agreement. This added \$4.21 million in funding available. Based on the audited financial statements for 2007/2008, the surplus was slightly more than anticipated, bringing the surplus funds available for 2008/2009 to \$4.35 million.

Reinvesting in student success

The Board is committed to success for every student, which means providing an equitable continuum of services to meet the full diversity of learning needs of Vancouver students. We believe, as stated in the throne speech, that investing in education is always important, but in difficult economic times, it is more so than ever.

As we go into provincial deficit spending, we need to be sure that we're equipping all students with the knowledge and skills to thrive in our rapidly changing world and to find their way out of the deficit and challenging economic climate. We can't leave them with a debt and shortchange them on the education they will need to tackle it.

The Board's priorities in allocating the \$40 million reinvestment are:

1. Students

Class size and composition: We know that manageable class sizes and adequate support for students with special learning needs are key factors in the ability of teachers to be most effective. We also recognize the need for flexibility in allowing smaller class sizes in cases where it benefits groups of students or to allow for a full range of course options. We would invest in more teachers to bring class sizes down so that teachers have more time to spend with each student. We would also increase non-enrolling support positions and student support workers, to ensure success for students with special needs.

Support for students with special learning needs: In addition to supporting students with special needs by investing in reduced class size and supports for composition, this board would ensure equitable and timely access to speech/language support, psych-educational assessments, specialist resource teachers and other professional supports as required.

Support for Aboriginal Students: The gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student completion rates is far too wide. This board is committed to working with Aboriginal communities to increase support and improve outcomes for our Aboriginal students.

Support for vulnerable students: We have a wide range of vulnerable students in Vancouver schools who may live in poverty, be or have been exposed to violence (domestically or in other countries), lack secure housing or face other issues that affect their ability to learn. We need the support services in place to support these students and their families to enable them to overcome their challenges and succeed in school.

Support students who have English as their Second Language (ESL): We recognize the importance of providing increased support to our ESL students.

2. Staff

Teachers and Support Workers: We would invest in more teachers to bring class sizes down so that teachers have more time to spend with each student. We would also increase non-enrolling support positions and student support workers, to ensure success for students with special needs.

School-based administrators: Principals and vice principals not only provide educational leadership in schools, they work closely with staff, students, parents and the community to ensure smooth and effective operation of schools. They also perform important safety and reporting functions. We are committed to maintaining optimal administrative staffing levels at all schools.

Mental Health and Wellness: We are seeing increased levels of mental health problems among staff and students. The district is working on prevention and support, but requires resources and staffing to be effective.

Employee Development: The success of our school district depends on the people working within it. The board supports investing in ongoing employee development opportunities for all employees.

3. Resources

Equity: Chronic underfunding has increased the need for alternative funding sources, even to provide basic learning resources. The capacity for fundraising varies from community to community, which means some students have less access to resources. We believe an adequately funded school system means equitable access to staff, programs, services and supplies for all students.

Support for neighbourhood schools and program options: We believe all students should have equitable access to comprehensive neighbourhood schools that are equipped with resources and services to meet the needs of all students. We also support an equitable distribution of program options throughout the district.

Libraries: School libraries are the heart of our schools. We need to invest in school librarians and a rich range of library resources to engage and stimulate our students and prepare them to meaningfully work with rapidly expanding information sources.

Facilitating community use of schools: The district is receiving increasing numbers of requests for community use of school facilities, particularly for child care. This adds an extra workload for our facilities staff, who are tasked with advising and coordinating service-provider groups as they work through legal and financial processes. We want to support these groups but need the resources to do so.

Learning Resources: We need to equip our schools with the up-to-date and adequate learning resources that reflect the value we place on student learning.

Technology: Our schools lag in access to technology to support student learning. We need up-to-date equipment for schools in addition to investing in our administrative infrastructure, such as our Human Resources Information System.

Playgrounds: We believe elementary schools should be equipped with safe, stimulating and well-maintained playgrounds and age-appropriate sports equipment.

4. Principles

Our priorities are based on the principle of equitable access to public education that recognizes the diversity of student needs and provides full opportunities for every student to succeed in school. In addition to the priorities listed above, the board has two additional priority areas:

Social Responsibility: Our schools are committed to fostering a sense of social responsibility in students. With increasing community concerns about gang violence, bullying, racism and homophobia, we need to ensure we have the resources to support proactive social responsibility programs.

Safety: Many of our schools not only require seismic upgrades, aging facilities and inadequate maintenance budgets can lead to unhealthy school environments. We need to reinvest in our schools and ensure maintenance budgets are sufficient to keep schools clean and in good repair. We also need to be fully prepared to respond effectively to emergency situations.

The above list outlines the priorities trustees have identified through the budget process and through dialogue with stakeholder group representatives, individuals in both the school and larger community. When and if these reinvestment funds become available, trustees would engage in a consultative process with our education partners to determine the specific funding allocations to the above listed areas.

