



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

1580 West Broadway

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Thursday, September 24, 2009

Connie Denesiuk,
President
British Columbia School Trustees Association
4th floor - 1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 5K9

Dear Connie:

I am writing on behalf of the Vancouver Board of Education to advise that trustees, at an emergency meeting on September 9, 2009, passed the following motions:

- That the Vancouver School Board request the BC School Trustees Association to develop a province-wide advocacy plan to respond to the cancellation of the AFG program and other proposed cuts to boards of education arising from the September 1, 2009, Province of BC Budget Update.
- That the VSB prepare a package of recommendations for inclusion in a province wide BCSTA advocacy plan to respond to the cancellation of the AFG program and other proposed cuts to boards of education arising from the September 1, 2009, Province of BC Budget Update, and that those recommendations be presented to the BCSTA Metro and Provincial Council meetings in September 2009.

The BCSTA has increased its advocacy efforts since the 2009 Annual General Meeting and many individual boards have also engaged in advocacy initiatives. News that the Ministry of Education has cancelled the AFG for 2009-10, subsequent grant cancellations/reductions, in addition to increased cost to boards, require the association to further ramp up its advocacy efforts.

Vancouver trustees feel strongly the following elements should be included in the BCSTA advocacy plan:

- Strongly opposing the cancellation of the Annual Facilities Grant (AFG) program for the 2009-10 school year.
- Urging the Ministry of Education to restore fully AFG funding to boards of education for the 2009-10 school year and beyond.
- Requesting the Province of BC to ensure that boards of education are provided with adequate funding from the Ministry of Health to cover measures related to H1N1, as recommended by the Provincial Health Officer.
- Calling on the Province of BC to provide boards of education with adequate funding to cover the cost of increased MSP premiums for school district employees.

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

- Requesting the Province of BC to ensure that boards of education are provided with the 75 per cent Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) rebate that will be made available to municipalities.
- Calling on the Ministry of Education to ensure that prior to the implementation of the all-day Kindergarten program, consultations be held with the BCSTA, boards of education, Coalition of Child Care Advocates and other appropriate organizations, including the BCTF, to develop a comprehensive plan for developing and implementing the program, and that the plan include a fully funded budget plan that takes into account, human resources, facilities, curriculum, and related matters.
- Requesting the Province of BC to reinstate the \$20 per-student grant to school-based Parent Advisory Councils.

With the current education funding crisis, it would also be very useful for school trustees to have a province-wide network for sharing and exchanging information.

At the present time there is no province-wide e-mail list for school trustees. The BCSTA has a mailing list for Board chairpersons. A province-wide e-mail list would enable all school trustees throughout the province to network and share information. The mailing list would also enhance communications between the BCSTA, boards of education, and individual trustees.

Recognizing this, Vancouver trustees passed the following related motion at its September 21, 2009 meeting:

- That the BCSTA establish a province-wide e-mail list that is all available to all school trustees for the purpose of facilitating the sharing information, enhancing communications, and networking amongst school trustees.

Public education faces a difficult future should government continue to underfund school boards. It will take all trustees, speaking with a unified voice through the BCSTA, to protect BC schools and ensure our students are not short changed as a result of the government's failure to fully fund the costs of our school districts.

Vancouver trustees look forward to working with you, and our colleagues from across B.C., in delivering the message that a strong B.C. for tomorrow is best achieved by investing in education today.

Sincerely,



Patti Bacchus
Chair, Vancouver Board of Education

cc. Vancouver Board of Education trustees
Laurie Anderson, VSB Superintendent of Schools
Brenda Ng, VSB Secretary-Treasurer
All school boards