



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

1580 West Broadway

Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

Telephone: 604-713-5000

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Thursday, September 24, 2009

Honourable Kevin Falcon
Minister of Health
PO BOX 9050
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Falcon:

I am writing on behalf of the Vancouver Board of Education to request the Ministry of Health reimburse the school district for measures put in place this fall related to the spread H1N1 influenza A in the community.

Vancouver school district is following all of the recommendations handed down by Provincial Medical Health Officer Dr. Perry Kendall, and is actively taking steps to prevent the transmission of the H1N1 virus. These include purchase and distribution of increased hand soap and dispensers, hand towels and dispensers, facial tissue, surface cleaner and related supplies, posters and printed materials, and twice day cleaning of high-touch-surfaces.

In addition, we anticipate increases in grievances, Employee Assistance Plan use, and rising leave/absenteeism costs for staff at higher risk of severe complications from H1N1, namely pregnant staff and those with chronic illnesses.

These measures will come with a significant cost, and we expect the district will require extraordinary funding in excess of our approved budget submitted to the Ministry of Education. If the school district is required to pay for these measures from its approved budget, it will come from funds set aside for supporting our students in our classrooms.

The school district is funded to educate tomorrow's generation. It is not in funded for responding to public health crisis – that is the role of the Ministry of Health. Given the current financial climate, and the fact that H1N1 is a public health issue, we respectfully request funding from your ministry to pay for our added costs.

The table below provides a rough estimate of our costs. We will submit actual costs as the weeks progress. As we know that H1N1 is a priority of your office as well as in our schools, we look forward to your favourable reply.

Sincerely,

Patti Bacchus,
Chair, Vancouver Board of Education

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

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

BUDGET

The following are preliminary estimates based on current supply costs.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Assumptions</i>	<i>Total</i>
Soap Dispensers	o Dispensers cost \$25 each and this is discounted based on quantity. We are not providing hand soap to schools and have spent \$7,000 last year to add and replace dispensers.	\$15,000
Liquid Hand Soap	o Last year we spent \$10,000 for hand soap district wide. It is estimated this will increase by 25%. This may be low, as in practice it may be as high as a 50% increase based on hand washing education and promotion.	\$2,500 - \$5,000
Paper Towels	o Last year our district spent \$186,000 on paper towels. Our estimate is for an approx 20% increase. This may be low, as it may be as high as a 50% increase based on hand washing education and promotion.	\$40,000 - \$93,000
Spray bottles	o Cost at \$2.00 each and as noted there are 2,576 classrooms and ~ 120 offices. Our estimated is based on this with some allowance for additional spaces such as counseling areas etc.	\$6,000
Disinfectant	o Last year our district spent ~ \$40,000 on disinfectant for washroom cleaning. Our estimate is for a 20% increase, however, in practice this could be as high as 100% based on every classroom having a plastic bottle of the agent.	\$8,000- \$40,000
Wipe cloths	o Cost at \$2.00 each. To provide one per classroom, office, and department ~3,500 pieces are estimated.	\$7,000
Facial Tissues	o It is estimated that our district will need to provide 1 box of tissue a week to 2,576 classroom and ~120 offices. Current quotes are for ~\$1.30 per box, however, it is hoped this will be improved due to order volume. Note: September, December, April, May and June are estimated to be either 2 or 3 boxes a month.	\$115,600
TOTAL ADDED SUPPLY COSTS:		\$281,600



DEC 14 2009

DEC 10 2009

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Ms. Patti Bacchus,
Chair, Vancouver Board of Education
1580 West Broadway
Vancouver BC V6J 5K8

Dear Ms. Bacchus:

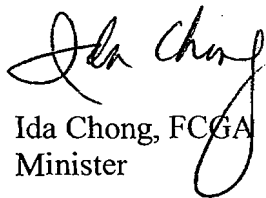
Thank you for your letter of September 24, 2009, addressed to Honourable Kevin Falcon, Minister of Health Services, requesting that the Ministry of Health Services reimburse the Vancouver Board of Education for \$281,600.00 in supply costs related to H1N1 influenza prevention. As this issue falls under the purview of the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, I am pleased to respond on his behalf, and I apologize for the delay.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Board for its support and commitment in preventing the spread of infectious disease in the school setting. We recognize the valuable role and contribution of our education partners and school personnel in health promotion and prevention activities, and your work to foster and support a healthy school environment for students and staff.

The current H1N1 influenza pandemic has resulted in additional costs for all communities in British Columbia (BC). As such, every sector is being asked to do its part to ensure good hygiene practices and to prevent the spread of germs. Student access to basic hygiene supplies for hand washing and cleaning is important to good health. The costs associated with H1N1 are similar to those seen during normal flu seasons, and as these costs are a part of year to year operating funding, school districts are expected to budget accordingly.

Our government continues to work to prevent or lessen the impact of pandemic influenza in British Columbia. The influenza pandemic has required coordinated planning efforts across all communities in BC. I would like to express my appreciation for your Board's contribution and efforts to protect the health and wellbeing of children and staff.

Sincerely,



Ida Chong, FCGA
Minister

Ministry of
Healthy Living
and Sport

Office of the
Minister

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9067 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Location:
Parliament Buildings
Victoria