



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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May 28, 2010

Honourable Rich Coleman
Minister of Housing and Social Development
PO Box 9934 Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC V8W9R2

Honourable Margaret MacDiarmid
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Station Provincial Government
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2

Re: Playground Funding Grants

Dear Minister Coleman and Minister MacDiarmid:

At its 2010 March 22nd meeting, the Vancouver Board of Education passed a motion to request the Provincial Government restore the playground funding grants made available to Parent Advisory Councils (PACs).

The Provincial Government's decision to make school playgrounds ineligible for community gaming grants for 2011-2012 will negatively impact Vancouver students and communities as many such playgrounds are in need of replacement.

A recent Playground Equipment Audit identified numerous Canadian Standards Association safety issues. The most prevalent issue identified in the audit was the steady deterioration of wooden playgrounds located at most schools throughout the Vancouver school district. Some of the equipment identified needed to be removed as soon as possible as it could pose a risk of injury. Over the last few months an assortment of playground equipment was removed and not replaced. The costs to remove the highest priority equipment and site remediation will be a budget pressure for the 2010/2011 school year. It is also anticipated that 164 pieces of playground equipment will be removed in the next 5-10 years.

In November 2009 a VBE staff report on Playground Equipment Replacement identified the need to replace a large amount of playground equipment within the district within the next 5-10 years. Estimated costs to replace playgrounds with similar modern equipment were \$4.7 Million (at today's prices).

Board of School Trustees:

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Jane Bouey - Vice-Chairperson

Allan Blakey Ken Clement Ken Denike

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School PACs continue to be the funding source for replacement playground equipment in the Vancouver school district. For many PACs fundraising for playground equipment is a daunting task and the availability of gaming grants is a key component in these fundraising efforts. The availability of safe playground equipment is important for the provision of daily physical activity for many students and the vitality of the school community. The Board has expressed unanimous support for the reinstatement of school playgrounds to the list of funding priorities eligible for gaming grants and we look forward to the Provincial Government adopting such changes for the benefit of our school communities.

Sincerely,



Patti Bacchus
Chairperson

Pc: VSB Board of Trustees
Cairine Macdonald, MHSD Deputy Minister
James Gorman, MOE Deputy Minister
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