



# Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

1580 West Broadway

Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

Telephone: 604-713-5000

Fax: 604-713-5049

Thursday, June 10, 2010

Hon. Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, MLA  
Minister of Education  
PO BOX 9045 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Dr. MacDiarmid:

I am writing to thank you for meeting with Vancouver school trustees June 8 concerning the *Report on the Vancouver School Board* prepared for the Minister of Education by the Office of the Comptroller General, Ministry of Finance.

Trustees remain disappointed the Special Advisor's report does not resolve the core challenge facing Vancouver and other school boards across British Columbia: How to avert cuts detrimental to student learning in the face of a growing gap between provincial funding and board responsibilities to deliver education.

We were hopeful the Special Advisor could identify areas of savings or revenue opportunities to help manage the school district's \$17-million shortfall. The report offers suggestions for potential savings, and notes several are already underway under the leadership of our board, but provides little in the way of immediate relief for the district. Many of the reductions and revenue opportunities proposed will take longer than one year to realize, leaving trustees in the same difficult position that we've been in since the Special Advisor's appointment.

Trustees request a sign of good faith on your part through the provision of immediate funding to address the school district's projected shortfall for 2010-11 and allow us to protect the educational services students desperately need.

The board is also troubled by the contents of the Special Advisor's report – not only what is included, but what's missing. We are particularly concerned that the structure of the provincial funding model for education was specifically excluded from the Special Advisor's scope of work.

We have consistently said provincial underfunding is the primary cause of our budget shortfall, and the VSB is just one voice among many boards in the same situation. Instead of asking the Special Advisor to investigate this issue, her team was directed to focus its efforts solely on the VSB.

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Board of School Trustees:

Patti Bacchus - Chairperson

Jane Bouey - Vice-Chairperson

Allan Blakey Ken Clement Ken Denike

Carol Gibson Sharon Gregson Mike Lombardi

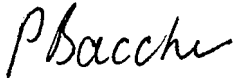
Allan Wong

It is important to all British Columbians that the adequacy of the provincial funding formula be reviewed with specific attention to whether or not provincially negotiated or imposed cost increases to school districts are fully funded. We therefore ask that a review of the funding formula be performed by an independent officer of the legislature, such as the Auditor General.

I will also remind you of an outstanding request from this board and its stakeholders dated April 27 asking for a meeting with you prior to final consideration and adoption of the 2010-11 preliminary operating budget. We are scheduled to vote on the operating budget June 23, and the signatories of the previous letter still wish to meet with you to share our concerns that our world-class public education system is at risk of deterioration due to the chronic and increasing financial pressure from provincial underfunding.

I look forward to your positive responses to our requests.

Sincerely,



Patti Bacchus  
Chairperson, Vancouver Board of Education

cc. VBE trustees  
Steve Cardwell, Superintendent of Schools  
Brenda Ng, Secretary-Treasurer