



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

May 25, 2012

The Honourable George Abbott
Minister of Education
Parliament Buildings
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Gov
Victoria, British Columbia
V8V 1X4

George
Dear Minister Abbott:

Re: Changes to the Education Guarantee

The Board of Education of School District No. 39 (Vancouver) has asked me to write you to express its concerns about the proposed changes to the Education Guarantee, which were introduced on May 1, 2012.

The Vancouver School District has one of the largest Adult Education programs in the province, serving 2500 full time equivalent students, approximately 22 percent of whom are graduated adults. These graduated adults attend courses in order to upgrade their skills and qualifications in preparation for entry to post-secondary institutions and for joining the workforce. While we recognize that the Ministry has chosen to fund core literacy foundation courses and a select number of senior level subject area courses, many other course options will be subject to a tuition fee. For many of our students, the costs of tuition will be prohibitive, and will negatively impact their ability to access further education opportunities. We think it is shortsighted to have limited the list of tuition-free courses which will be available to graduated adult learners.

Of further concern is the proposed change to the funding allocation for Distributed Learning (DL) courses this September 2012, and for DL and Continuing Education (CE) courses in September 2013. By withholding 50 percent of course funding until course completion, the district will be placed in the position of having to expend funds on staff and resources prior to having full funding in place, and without a guarantee of full compensation for these expenses. Given current budget challenges, this is an unworkable and unsustainable funding model.

The effect of these proposed changes will be borne not only by graduated adults, but by all students in Adult Education. We anticipate that by applying a tuition fees to courses for graduated adults the overall student enrollment will decrease, resulting in the loss of course offerings to under 19 year old and non-graduated students, as well.

Board of School Trustees:

Patti Bacchus - Chairperson

Mike Lombardi - Vice-Chairperson

Fraser Ballantyne Ken Clement Ken Denike

Cherie Payne Allan Wong Sophia Woo

Rob Wynen

The Vancouver School District Adult Education program is an important part of the continuum of learning in our city, supporting the development of an engaged and literate society.

We urge you to rescind the proposed changes to the Education Guarantee.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P Bacchus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Patti Bacchus
Chairperson

c: VBE Trustees
Steve Cardwell, Superintendent of Schools
Rick Krowchuk, Secretary Treasurer