



VIA EMAIL
Ref: 140563

June 23, 2010

Patti Bacchus, Chair
Board of Education
School District No. 39 (Vancouver)
Email: patti.bacchus@vsb.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Bacchus:

Thank you for submitting your Board's proposed budget for the upcoming school year 2010/11.

The Comptroller General's report was clear that the Board's current fiscal circumstances are a direct result of a pattern of poor decisions, wasteful spending, and Board mismanagement. The Comptroller General also concluded that the Board has adequate resources to provide education programming and opportunities to redirect savings to the classroom exist.

Upon review of the proposed 2010/11 budget, there remain several measures identified by the Comptroller General that the Board could expedite to redirect nearly \$1 million in savings to the classroom this year. These specific measures include:

- reducing Board and committee structure costs;
- contracting out 3 non-teaching cafeterias;
- increasing building rental rates to match Richmond levels; and
- increasing rental lease rates as recommended by the District Management Team

The Comptroller General's report also points out the Board has several revenue opportunities such as the re-negotiation of commercial leases to fair market value and the growth potential of international education and distributed learning. The report highlights wasteful spending; nearly \$700,000 is spent on annual leases for educational space when the Vancouver District has thousands of empty seats.

Furthermore, the Board has opportunities to achieve substantial savings through pursuing shared services opportunities related to payroll, business administration systems, WorkSafe BC claims management and information technology. In addition, further savings can be achieved by aligning staffing levels consistent with comparable school districts.

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The Vancouver Board of Education is responsible for managing the District and is accountable to Vancouver parents and students.

I expect this Board to take the Comptroller General's report seriously and start planning to redirect valuable resources to the classroom so these challenges can be avoided in the future.

Moving forward, Ministry of Education staff will be monitoring the Board's progress on implementing the Comptroller General's recommendations. This will include regular financial reporting to the Ministry and the development of a long term strategic plan that will ensure resources are appropriately managed to the benefit of students and will avoid the kind of fiscal situation the Board's actions created this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret MacDiarmid". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "M".

Margaret MacDiarmid
Minister