



September 12, 2018

Ref: 203966

Janet Fraser, Chair  
Board of Education  
School District No. 39 (Vancouver)  
**Email: Janet.Fraser@vsb.bc.ca**

Dear Ms. Fraser:

Thank you for your letter dated June 22, 2018, regarding a Vancouver Board of Education motion that was passed on May 28, 2018.

Our government is focused on making historic investments in British Columbia's public school system, a system that serves 563,247 public school students and their families.

We will invest \$2.0 billion over three years to replace aging public schools, add more spaces in growing communities, and fast-track seismic upgrades. Additionally, operating funding is increasing by \$409 million over the next three years, and finally, a \$5 million annual playground fund will help public boards of education build new playgrounds that children across British Columbia will enjoy for years to come. In the context of these announcements, it should be noted that independent schools do not receive funding for capital investments. Public boards of education have benefited from an estimated \$80 million in savings returned to school districts since 2017, including the drop in MSP premiums in 2017/18, the decreased contribution rate for Teachers and Municipal Pension Plans, and the savings in Next Generation Network costs. In addition, government has committed to fund public boards of education for e-net costs related to the new Employer Health Tax.

British Columbia families are entitled to enrol their children in a public school free of charge, or they may enrol in an independent school if they wish. Provincial funding for eligible independent schools in British Columbia has been in place since 1977. Currently, funding for independent schools is based on a formula, which has been in place for almost 30 years. Independent schools serve 13 percent of the K-12 school-age population for 6.6 percent of the total education budget.

Each independent school is classified into one of four groups, only two of which are eligible for provincial funding. For the funded classifications, Group 1 schools receive 50 percent of the local boards of education per student operating grant, while Group 2 schools receive 35 percent of that amount.

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These partly funded schools encompass a diverse range of students, communities and interests, including First Nations, Montessori, Waldorf, university preparatory, faith communities and diverse needs education. Funded schools must meet the learning outcomes in the BC curriculum and hire British Columbia certified teachers. To ensure quality, all independent schools are subject to a regular system of inspections so that they meet the requirements of their respective classification.

Again, thank you for writing and sharing your concerns with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Fleming". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rob" being more prominent than the last name "Fleming".

Rob Fleming  
Minister

pc: Suzanne Hoffman, Superintendent, School District No. 39 (Vancouver)