

Lord Byng PAC Budget Presentation, April 28, 2014

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John Puddifoot, Lord Byng DPAC Representative presenting

The parents at Byng are glad to hear that the last of the provincial holdback funds distributed as usual to all districts are sufficient to continue the Strings/Band program. After the outcry of two years ago, it is surprising that reductions to any part of the Strings/Band program are being put forward by this board at all. It's nearly as though the consultation of two years ago was ignored, or there are other reasons for this obviously disliked proposal coming forward. Regardless, we urge the trustees to follow through with their suggestion to use this funding that they were expecting anyway to continue the Strings/Band program and to make sure it continues into the future.

However more funding needs to be found. We have further proposals to do this as follows:

1. The committee structure could be revised as suggested in the Special Advisor's report under recommendation 1.2 on page 15. From January to April 2010, highly paid staff were attending as many as 103 meetings utilizing over 200 hours each. The wages paid to these staff members are not small, and these meetings cost an estimated \$800,000 to \$1.0 million. As the committee structure has not changed, it is likely this is still the case. A reduction in the length of these meetings could be achieved by less political posturing by the trustees and restricting them to gathering applicable stakeholder input.

Source: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pubs/2010-06_special_advisor_report.pdf

Lamenting less than desired provincial funding only wastes time at meetings for no gain. The board would be better using the money wasted during those soapbox speeches to buy lottery tickets than try to change a provincial budget that is already set.

2. Again, increase Class size. Yes complicated, but not impossible and done anyway. Every year all districts adjust classes and class size as enrolment is finalized. This year the board will be adjusting already for 850 fewer students. The board has done this many times in the past as enrolment has declined. In 2002-03 boards were allowed to increase of class size substantially, and it was done. Significant changes in class size also occurred in 1997 when the new collective agreement that was legislated on the boards required class sizes to be reduced substantially. My own experience as PAC chair at Queen Mary saw 45 students appear at its door two weeks into September requiring all classes in the school to be adjusted and a new class opened. Class size most certainly can be adjusted, is constantly and during every budget cycle.

The impact of slightly larger classes is minimal on the amount of time each student will have with the teacher. For example, increasing average class size by one student in grades 8 to 12, will mean 1.56 hours less per year with the teacher. (37.82 hours per year versus 39.38) This is about 94 minutes per year less or about 30 seconds per day. Details of the increasing class size and the amount of direct teacher attention each student potentially loses are in Appendix A.

While it is not desirable to increase class size, it is certainly preferable to increase class size than to cut programs that keep the students engaged. Indeed, many of the other proposed cuts are to programs that not only engage students: they keep at risk students in school. Make some of the suggested cuts and you will lose students: possibly tragically.

However it has been brought to our attention that the decision not to reduce class size seems to have been made back in February without consultation. This is due to the current procedure used to set

classes. This is odd considering that the board were anticipating a significant shortfall and reducing class size is an obvious and better way to address this.

3. Initiate a Trades Teacher certification pilot. As most people are aware, there is a government focus on training students for careers in the trades. Further, the BC Teachers' Council is considering ways to certify Red Seal and Journeyman trades' workers to conduct instruction as teachers. Rather than cut building maintenance and the resulting trades positions, instead collaborate with the Ministry of Education and the Teachers' Council to establish a pilot program designed to do maintenance on school buildings by students under the guidance of a skilled tradesperson. This will give students needed valuable skills, employ tradespeople, and get desired work done on board facilities.
4. Process of consultation. Releasing proposals a scant two weeks prior to the final budget being passed gives stakeholder groups no time to consider alternatives. Already the board is projecting a shortfall of over 25 million for 2015/16 so there is no reason the board can't start figuring out what to adjust now, rather than in April 2015. The electorate would like to know where each trustee will be putting their priorities: what would you keep, and what would you cut? We look forward to this in the campaign literature.
5. Less "Advocacy" Advocating for Vancouver has shown little or no benefit to the district. Other districts who don't spend money on advocacy get the same as Vancouver. Advocacy is what the BCSTA is for, and this is far less costly than the Vancouver advocacy budget. Returning to the Special Advisor's report, there are significant questions around this activity especially as the main purpose seems to be political while using provincial funds meant for the classroom.
6. A previous presenter suggested running the schools until the money runs out, and then shutting them. While we don't call for a strike/lockout to address fiscal issues, we must ask how much a strike/lockout would save and has this possibility been included in the budget projections? After all, any job action that closes schools saves this board money.

As a final comment, and switching hats to my role as 1st Vice President of the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, I bring to the board's attention a resolution coming forward to our next AGM. This resolution is attached. We trust this board sees value in authentic budget consultation with parents and will support the intent of the resolution should it be approved by the parents of BC.

Sincerely

John Puddifoot

Lord Byng Secondary School DPAC Representative
1st Vice President, BCCPAC

Appendix A: Savings from Increasing VSB Average Class Sizes					
	Grades				Totals
	K	1 to 3	4 to 7	8 to 12	
Current Average Class Size 2013/14	18.0	21.9	26.4	24.2	23.6
Number of Students (FTE) 2013/14	3,824.0	11,036.0	14,125.0	23,985.4	52,970.4
Number of FTE Classes	212.4	503.9	535.0	991.1	2,242.5
Change in Class Size					
0.10 Students	18.1	22.0	26.5	24.3	23.7
0.40 Students	18.4	22.3	26.8	24.6	24.0
1.00 Students	19.0	22.9	27.4	25.2	24.6
2.00 Students	20.0	23.9	28.4	26.2	25.6
Change in Time Spent by A Student Over One Year with the Teacher. (Assuming all teacher class time is spent One on One. In Hours.)					
0.10 Students	0.26	0.18	0.13	0.16	
0.40 Students	1.03	0.72	0.50	0.64	
1.00 Students	2.50	1.75	1.22	1.56	
2.00 Students	4.74	3.36	2.34	3.01	
Change in Number of FTE Classes					
0.10 Students	(1.2)	(2.3)	(2.0)	(4.1)	(9.5)
0.40 Students	(4.6)	(9.0)	(8.0)	(16.1)	(37.3)
1.00 Students	(11.2)	(22.0)	(19.5)	(39.3)	(91.1)
2.00 Students	(21.2)	(42.2)	(37.7)	(75.7)	(175.1)
Change in the Budget					
0.10 Students	(83,640)	(163,227)	(143,875)	(290,651)	(673,688)
0.40 Students	(329,104)	(644,123)	(569,057)	(1,148,424)	(2,661,097)
1.00 Students	(796,778)	(1,568,115)	(1,391,489)	(2,802,702)	(6,490,616)
2.00 Students	(1,513,879)	(3,005,007)	(2,684,986)	(5,391,457)	(12,474,562)
Assumptions					
Variable Cost of a Class	71,260.00	(Cost of a teacher as presented in proposal D2)			
Hours of Instruction	854	879	879	953	
Comparables (Average Class Sizes Elsewhere)					
Burnaby	19.4	21.2	26.5	24.8	
Coquitlam	19.7	22.0	28.7	25.8	
Delta	19.4	22.2	27.3	22.5	
New Westminster	19.2	22.5	25.8	24.5	
North Vancouver	19.2	22.1	27.2	24.5	
Richmond	20.0	22.4	27.2	23.9	
Surrey	19.5	21.4	26.4	22.7	
West Vancouver	18.5	20.7	26.1	25.1	
Average	19.4	21.8	26.9	24.2	
Jules Quesnel	22.0	23.2	30.0		
Lord Byng				25.5	
Lord Kitchener	20.2	23.6	25.7		
Queen Elizabeth	19.0	19.3	28.4		
Queen Elizabeth Annex	22.0	23.7			
Queen Mary	20.0	22.4	25.7		
Above Base Data for 2013/14 from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/district.php					

Appendix B					
Return to Historical Staffing Levels					
	Actual		Using 2008/09 Ratio for 13/14 Enrolment	Change	Value
	2008/09	2013/14			
Teachers	3,186.34	3,053.39	3,015.90	(37.49)	(2,671,239.2)
Ratio Students to Teachers	17.92	17.70	17.92		
Education Assistants	801.25	869.11	758.40	(110.71)	(5,286,476.2)
Ratio Students to Educational Assistants	71.28	62.20	71.28		
Support Staff	1,259.63	1,263.85	1,192.21	(71.64)	(3,420,743.5)
Ratio Students to Support Staff	45.34	42.77	45.34		
Assumptions					
Cost of a Teacher	71,260.00	(Cost of a teacher as presented in proposal D2)			
Cost of an Educational Assistant	47,750.00	(Cost of a Educational Assistant as presented in proposal D18)			
Cost of a Support Staff	45,000.00				
Source of base data: http://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/14Apr08_op_plenary_III_V_item1_0.pdf					

Submitted by: BCCPAC Board

Be it resolved that

BCCPAC call on the BC School Trustees' Association, the BC Association of School Business Officials and the Ministry of Education to, in conjunction with BCCPAC, develop and implement standardized processes to improve the transparency and clarity of preliminary budget information to support parent consultation during the district budget process.

Proposer's Position Statement Supporting the Resolution.

Parents, PACs and DPACs, often participate in the annual district preliminary budget process. Frequently the information provided by the boards to aid in the consultation is complex, incomplete and lacking in options. The consultation process is reduced to pleas to keep certain programs or measures and offer little or no choice to parents as to what measures they prefer or other programs they may no longer want. The information provided is not in a standard format, nor directly comparable between districts or sometimes even with prior years in the same district. Parents are often provided with the proposed budget but days before the final budget decisions must be made again negating the possibility of meaningful feedback.

This makes it more difficult for parents to provide important feedback to boards regarding which choices for the final budget they prefer. This resolution is designed to provide parents with accurate information, choice and the time for careful consideration of the alternatives. This will lead to boards making better decisions about what parents want in their children's schools and a better education system.

The provided information should be:

- Complete
- Easy to understand
- In a standard and comparable format for all districts
- Include a list of all budgetary items and amounts that are not mandated by the Ministry of Education
- Provide significant choice in measures that will increase or decrease the size of the district budget.
- Provided to parents before February 28th of each year.

Implementer

BCCPAC, BC School Trustees' Association, BC Association of School Business Officials, Ministry of Education

Interested Parties

BC School Superintendents' Association, Office of the Premier

April 28, 2014-04-23

Committee-of-the-Whole

Sonia Sara
ESL Instructor

Dear Trustees:

I acknowledge the difficult position you are in at this budget time and that you are forced by legislation to deliver a balanced budget. Due to chronic underfunding by the provincial government, senior management has proposed cutting Continuing Education once again. I understand a “needs” budget was presented alongside the balanced budget last year. If other school boards do the same, it will send a message to the provincial government, which is responsible for our underfunding predicament. Continuing Education instructors and students are deeply grateful for your advocacy work on our behalf and ask that you become even more vocal.

Cutting CE is on the table; cutting is a process whereby something is separated from its whole. Recently, the Vancouver School Board was renamed the Vancouver Board of Education to reflect inclusion of CE, Adult Ed and International Education.

If CE is eliminated, CUPE jobs including course programmers, custodial staff etc. will be moved elsewhere, and a new PASA position will be created. The only reduction in budget will be night school administrators and instructors which is a nominal savings. 200 CE instructors constitute only 23% of the salaries with 77% going to administrative salaries.

There are some discrepancies that need to be cleared up before a fair and final decision can be made. These are:

- in the costing , the receptionist and budget clerk are being billed as 1 FTE each when they are working as 0.5.
- in the April 22nd meeting, I asked whether it was feasible to operate CE with less staff. Maureen Ciarniello responded that it wasn't and that the NOCS in charge of other centers were being paid clerk salaries. When I worked at John Oliver, day school teachers were serving as night school principals, and to my understanding, were paid at their regular teacher rate.

James Neufeld revealed through North Seattle Continuing Education it is possible to run efficiently with less staff. It has run course programmer operating 150-200 courses whereas VSBCE has 5 course programmers and a PASA for 350-400 courses. Each VSBCE programmer runs 70 courses; in contrast, the programmer at North Seattle CE programs 200.

If we can prune back CE hard, we will be able to allocate more money to marketing and grow. This will involve some reorganization and restructuring, but where there's a will, there's a way. Some strategies are:

- Only running more in demand classes and running classes that have high enrolment (Artisan Bread – 20 students) twice a term.

- Have longer terms and a longer summer term. For example, in the summer, language and ESL classes are in demand, so run these types of classes. Other popular at this time may be photography, bird watching and dog obedience.
- As mentioned, we need to slim down night school centers and replace NOCS with CUPE staff.
- A final question to ask is whether VSB is renting out other high schools to private companies, and if so, what is the revenue? It has been suggested that VSB will make a lot of money by doing this, but this does not appear to be the case now, nor will it be.

I urge you to reread the marketing student, Elim Kwok's marketing and cost saving suggestions.

A compromise can be reached by pruning back CE and operating a leaner program rather than ending it completely. With the realized savings, we could hopefully allocate more funds to marketing. The proposed cuts mean that once CE is gone, it will be gone forever. We implore you to not let that happen under your watch.

Once again, we are thankful for your efforts on behalf of CE.

My name is Amir and I am here with Neeru my wife and my 2 children. We are here to make a request to not to cut the position of South-Asian Multicultural Workers. My family came here in August 2012 from India and they did not have any English. My daughter started school in grade 2 and my wife was connected with the South Asian multicultural worker who started working with us on a regular basis.

In the beginning, my daughter did not understand the instructions in the class. The Multicultural Worker worked with the class teacher and my daughter so that she could settle down in the class easily.

The teacher had many issues with her social skills, for example, her behaviour in class and outside the class. The teacher made us aware of those issues through the multicultural worker and all of us worked together on them. We being new in a country, are also going through the process of settling down and learning the values and culture.

We were very impressed with the services that were provided to us. I work long hours so my wife is responsible for my daughter's schooling. She does not speak English. She had no idea of –

- what to expect from the school,
- what her rights are,
- how she can take an active part in our daughter's school life?

Indian education system is very different from Canada. In India, she was given lots of home work every day. Children were expected to remember lots of things by heart. The teachers were very strict in the class. When she started here, the only homework she got was reading and we thought Canadian schools are not good. Teachers do not give homework because they do not want to do extra work. We did not know what to do with her time in the evening. We wanted our daughter to be filling pages of her notebooks every day.

The Multicultural worker explained to us why reading is so important for her at this age.

She taught us: what reading is;

how to read with your child at home.

I am very proud to say that my daughter has become a very good reader. She tells us the stories. She also tries to teach her mother English. The Multicultural worker helped us to enrol her in swimming, skating and dance programs. We are slowly understanding how good the public education is here. We always get good parenting

advice from her. She tells us how to talk to your child so that she does not get discouraged when she is not coping in school.

The multicultural worker has provided lay counselling in many different matters. Recently there was an incident at school where my daughter believed that she was accused of wrongdoing and she felt so hurt that she told her mother that she would rather be dead than hear these things about herself. At the end of the school, she was very upset and was crying nonstop. My wife phoned the worker at that time and she came to school in about 10 minutes. They all discussed the issue and consoled my daughter. The next day we met with the class teacher to clear things out. It would not have been possible without the help of the multicultural worker.

Since I work long hours and sometimes work 7 days a week and my wife discusses all the educational, social and emotional issues with her and gets help always. She did not get good marks in some of her tests and we again contacted the multicultural worker and consulted the teacher. My wife got a better understanding of what the teacher expects and she did very well after that.

We want our children to get the best possible education and have the same dreams for our children as everyone else in this room. But if we do not have anyone helping us we won't know –

- What to do,
- how to help our children in the same way as those parents who understand the school system?

Back home, we have a system that when a girl gets married she takes a big dowry with her to her husband's house. I am very clear now that I am not going to save money for her dowry. I have promised that I will do everything possible to give her good education. I want her to be a good person and financially independent.

But we need a lot of help at this point. We have no knowledge of:

- what to ask the teachers,
- how to get involved in their children's education?

We are sometimes afraid to help our child with her study. She has told us many times - "but that is not how we do at school". So we keep taking advice from the Multicultural worker.

This list is very long and I can go on and on. If you reduce this service, parents like us will not be able to get help. We will not have any one advocating for our children.

Each year festival of Diwali is celebrated at a very big scale at my daughter's school. The multicultural worker organizes this big event. There is a whole school assembly with singing, dancing and Indian food. My daughter being a good dancer performed in a small group and felt very proud. It helped in increasing her self-esteem and confidence as she was praised by so many staff members, students and parents. In addition to this, Multicultural also helps the staff with many other festivals and traditions of the community.

I wish we had more staff like this in our schools who are extremely knowledgeable and understand our traditions and values and help us keep them. We live in a society where it is important to know about each other and have respect for each other. We are very happy that the school system here honours diversity but if we do not have our ethnic workers in the schools we will lose on that and our children will also not know and lose the rich traditions.

It is very hard for families like us to adjust. The Multicultural workers provide a service we can't do without.

Many of our parents want to come here to talk about these cuts but don't have the English language.

So please for the sake of better future of our kids, please think very carefully before you make your decision.

Thank you and Namaste

VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR SPORTS

NUMBER OF TEAMS	1,500 Teams
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER COACHES (This does not include student and/or parent helpers and/or managers)	2,000 Coaches
AVERAGE NUMBER OF WEEKS PER SPORT SEASON	12 Weeks
AVERAGE NUMBER OF WKLY VOLUNTEER HRS PER SEASON PER COACH **Most coaches put in many more hours, especially during playoffs	8 Hours
EXCLUSION NOTE (S): **The <u>volunteer hours reflected do NOT include</u> the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hours needed for tryout assessments 2. Drive time to and from the games 3. Hours for extra helpers. Most teams have at least 1 extra person helping out (not a teacher) 4. Individuals brought in for positional training EG: volleyball setter 5. Collection of fees and/or uniforms and/or forms 6. Hours for student managers/scorekeepers/helpers and/or parent helpers 7. Hours put in for first aid help if a player is injured 8. Mentoring opportunities and/or university students helping their alma mater high school 	

VOLUNTEER SPORTS HOURS/COSTS IF PAID MINIMUM WAGE

8 hrs Average volunteer hours per coach weekly	X 12 wks 1 season	= 96 hrs Average volunteer hours per coach per season
96 hrs Average volunteer hours per coach weekly	X 2000 coaches To run 1,500 teams	= 192,000 hrs Overall average volunteer hours per year for 2000 coaches
192,000 hrs Overall average volunteer hrs per yr	X \$10.25 Min wage if paid	= \$1,968.00 Minimum SAVINGS (Doesn't reflect the 8 noted exclusions above)

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS VOLUNTEERED PER COACH PER SEASON

5.5 hrs Average working day, excludes lunch & transition between classes	96 hrs Average volunteer hours per coach per season	= 17.5 days Average number of days each coach volunteers per season
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- Background
 - On April 17 the parents were informed by letter the students will move to Tupper in September—we were provided no other information.

- Student Impact
 - When presented to the students, the first question was “Why us”--I have no answer for this simple question.
 - Immediate student impact: Anxiety, Agitation and general stress--This is likely to be the status quo for these students for the next several years at the proposed site.
 - Substandard environment—a well chosen room is essential for the success of these students as they spend all of their teaching blocks with their room as a focal point.

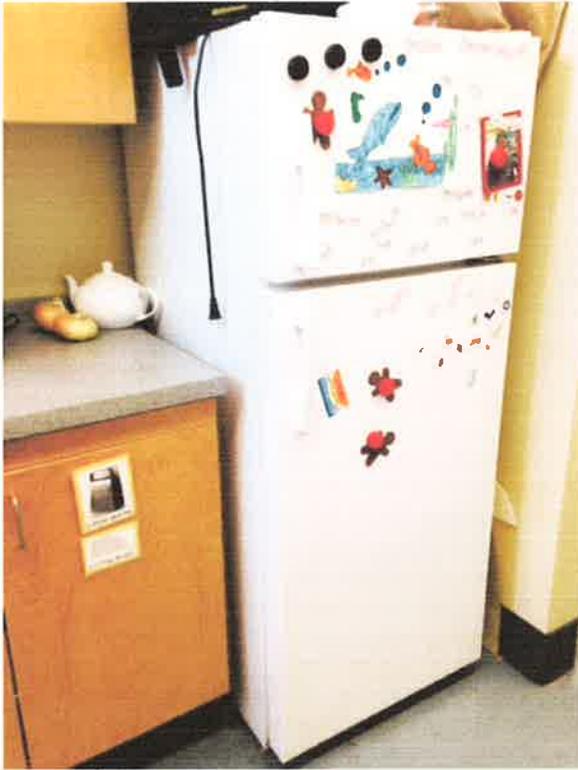
- Board and District Priorities—the proposed move does not align with stated Vision and mission statements and goals.
 - Board Vision: Engaged learners, inclusive schools and caring communities
 - The move will disengage the learners by removing the foundation of their program.
 - Reduce the inclusiveness of Lord Byng and the community.
 - And does not demonstrate caring communities
 - District Mission: “To enable students to reach their intellectual, social, aesthetic and physical potential in challenging and stimulating settings which reflect the worth of each individual and promote mutual respect, cooperation and social responsibility.”

- Safety and Hygiene
 - No line of sight to bathroom.
 - Bathroom is near and entry/exit point for the school.
 - The safety risk is compounded by no classroom water available for hand washing.
 - Nearby aquatic facilities also have line of sight issues not present at Byng facilities.
 - Student Supervision issues:
 - Playground, Pools, School, Local Community
 - The adjacent loading zone presents multiple hazards and is easily accessed while the students are out of sight attending the washroom.
- Program Changes:
 - Support staff and teacher changes.
 - Availability of aquatic facilities
 - Life skills supports:
 - Laundry, Kitchen, smart board, water to name a few.
 - Complete Community change
- Financial/Budget impact
 - The current program at Byng includes a number of features that are an asset to the School District and the residents of the city.
 - Kitchen facilities in room
 - Laundry facilities in room
 - Water availability in room
 - Instructional aides (e.g. smart boards)
 - Some additional issues at the new location
 - Environmental interference –Boiler room noise, Loud bell noise, Loading zone (noise, fumes), school bell
 - Noisy and open networking equipment in room.
- Recreating the existing program at Tupper will bear a significant cost and is an unnecessary district expenditure.

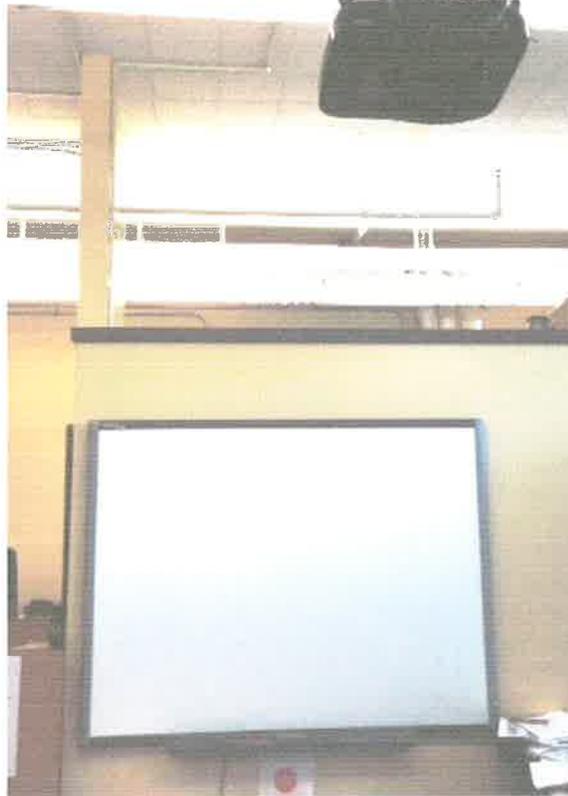
In sum,

This move does not align with the board and district priorities, discards a significant asset to the district, introduces a number of teaching, safety and hygiene issues and creates an unnecessary cost.

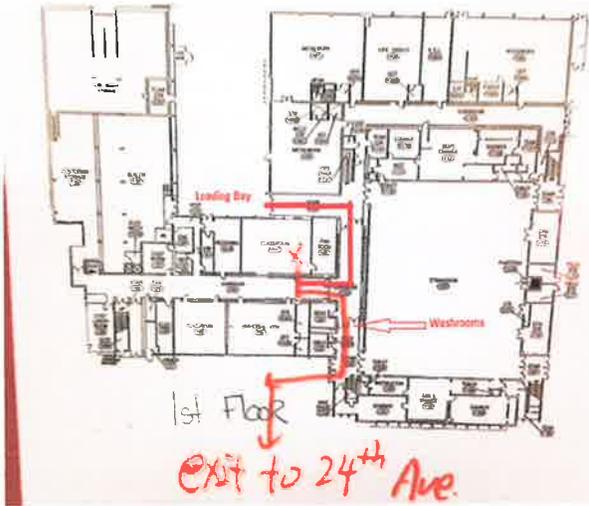
Lord Byng Life Skills II Classroom



Lord Byng Life Skills II Classroom



Tupper layout and classroom





Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

LEARNING SERVICES: SPECIAL EDUCATION

1580 West Broadway

Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

Telephone: 604-713-5000

Fax: 604-713-5244

April 17, 2014

Dear Parent or Guardian

As part of the on-going review of the continuum of support services provided for students with special needs in the District, a decision has been made to move the **Life Skills** program at **Lord Byng Secondary** to **Tupper Secondary** at the end of this current school year.

We recognize that moving schools may be unsettling for some children, and therefore, there will be an opportunity for transition planning for the students and the staff involved. The consultant who works with the program at Lord Byng will work with your child and the staff at the school to support this move.

Staff from Learning Services has reviewed your child's learning profile and are recommending that your child move with the program to Tupper. We are confident that your child's educational needs will continue to be met in this new setting. Bussing will continue to be provided to the new school.

Enclosed is a copy of the VSB Consent/Refusal for Special Education Placement form. We would appreciate it if this form could be signed and returned to your child's current teacher by May 15th at the latest.

Please feel free to contact me, or Cathy Hasley, District Principal of Special Education at chasley@vsb.bc.ca (604) 713-5432, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Catherine Jamieson
Director of Instruction
Learning Services
Vancouver School Board
cjamieson@vsb.bc.ca

c.c. Cathy Hasley - District Principal, Special Education



VANCOUVER BOARD OF EDUCATION

CONSENT OR REFUSAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT OR SERVICE

Student: _____
First Name *Surname*

Address: _____
Street Address

City *Province* *Postal Code* *Telephone*

Current School: _____

Special Education Placement Recommendation:

In order to best meet your child's educational needs, the Screening Committee has recommended that your child be enrolled in:

Name of Program: _____

Program Location: _____

Consent or Refusal of Special Education Placement Recommendation:

I have been informed of my child's Ministry Designation of: _____

The specifics of the above program have been discussed with me; I understand the nature of the program and why placement is recommended.

I, _____
(Please PRINT Name of Parent or Guardian)

Consent to my child being enrolled in the program.

Refuse the above recommended service and/or program placement.

PARENT/GUARDIAN _____ Date: _____
Signature *dd/mm/yy*

SCHOOL-BASED _____ Date: _____
Case Manager Signature *dd/mm/yy*

**Original form to be retained in student's confidential file and a copy faxed to:
Special Education Secretary, Learning Services 604-713-5244 or 604-713-5076**





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April 28, 2014

Dear Ms. Bacchus and Board of Trustees:

We are representing the Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia. We would like to express our organization's support for Ms. Bacchus' proposal that includes a one-year reprieve for the Elementary Band and Strings program and the establishment of a task force to explore a sustainable long-term solution for the program.

This proposal is collaborative, creative, and visionary in that it presents the opportunity for consultation and consideration about how the band and strings program might best fit into the VSB's structure for years to come. Members of the music community, including many you heard from at the first public budget meetings, have expressed strong approval of this proposal. Our community is committed to working in partnership with the VSB to provide the best possible music education for children. We are confident that an outstanding task force can be formed, comprised of great thinkers and doers from organizations and institutions such as the Coalition for Music Education in BC, the British Columbia Music Educators' Association (BCMEA), and UBC. Additionally, the opportunity to have conversations with other districts who have found effective solutions will surely open doors for the VSB.

The Coalition for Music Education in BC represents parents, teachers, students, the music industry, and organizations including the British Columbia Music Educators' Association, Vancouver Symphony, Vancouver Opera, Access to Music Foundation, BC Kodaly Society, BC Orff Chapter, and BC Choral Federation. We are here to support the VSB and partner with you to effect change both locally and provincially. The Coalition for Music Education in BC urges the board of trustees to vote in favour of Ms. Bacchus' proposal regarding the Elementary Band and Strings Program. We feel that this proposal is an excellent option, as it does not eliminate a program the public clearly values, it retains music specialist teachers, and it does not force families to cope with a pay-for-play model. It gives us a chance to take a step back and take some needed time to look at the possibilities for this program. The Coalition for Music Education in BC would welcome the opportunity to work with you on a task force. We believe this would indeed strengthen our platform for further advocacy with the provincial government. We would also welcome the opportunity to suggest other members for the task force, as our network of music professionals is vast.

We appreciate the effort you have put forth towards finding a creative and sustainable solution. When you vote on Wednesday, please remember the incredible advocacy you witnessed from parents, students, and the music community regarding the band and strings program. Remember that where there is a will there is a way, and that you have the support of many in search of the way to make this program work.

On Monday May 5, the tenth anniversary of Music Monday, schools across Canada will celebrate the power and joy of school music education. As the Coalition for Music Education in BC welcomes hundreds of guests (including the Jamieson Elementary Strings) to our celebration at the TELUS World of Science, and as Maestro Bramwell Tovey leads the entire nation, via webcast from Science World, in the performance of the Music Monday anthem, I hope we can celebrate and acknowledge a victory in the Vancouver School Board's commitment to quality music education.

Sincerely,
Christin Reardon MacLellan & Graham Blank
on behalf of the Coalition for Music Education in BC

**Budget Requests
for your Consideration
2014/2015 Budget Proposals**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present to this meeting. As many of the trustees know I have been a school library advocate and volunteer for over 16 years. As well, I sit on several library committees including Friends of the School Library and I am the DPAC representative on the School Library Resource Centre Consultative Committee. Over the last decade I have personally seen how the chronic under-funding to our education system has impacted school libraries on a day to day basis.

Everyone knows that the library is a phenomenally important part of the school. But let me paint you a picture of school libraries today. Currently, school libraries across the district show great inequities. Without minimum staffing levels, schools of similar size and demographics show vastly different levels of service, which is unfair to students and teaching staff in the under serviced schools.

There is now only a .4 district support position for the entire district. This particularly affects new teacher/librarians as the job can be a challenging one to learn. I realize the district support position is not slated for further cuts in the current budget proposal, but I think it is important for people to realize that this area in particular has suffered drastic cuts over the past few years. And I think it is important for trustees to bear in mind how these cuts have impacted libraries and thereby students, on a daily basis.

Technology hardware inequities are a daily problem in Vancouver school libraries. I have been to more budget meetings and brainstorming problem solving sessions than I can count. I often hear, from both trustees and other stakeholders, that they suggest moving towards more digital resources, such as e-books. Teacher/librarians know that school libraries are not only about books, but are about access to information, in any form. Teacher/librarians want to get that information into the hands of students, and want to teach students how to use the information they find. However, without the funding for devices, digital resources, and adequate bandwidth as well as both mentoring and technological support at the district level, this is a nearly impossible task to accomplish with any efficacy or equity district wide. Without district-funded hardware to support such a move we will see a great divide between have and have not schools in the system. PACs that can raise large amounts of money will do so, and may be able to purchase technology for students, but there will be other schools left with nothing. As well, without a full-time district position to mentor librarians through those changes, we will be left with teacher/librarians who are forced to try to learn new technologies on their own.

The proposed cut of \$50,000 to libraries will hurt. It will directly impact library programs, and students will notice this cut. Teacher/librarians are struggling to purchase resources and support curriculum with the funding they currently have. I certainly appreciate that this is slated to be a one-time cut, but I would like to remind trustees that libraries have not come through this decade of cuts unscathed, not by a long shot.

So, what am I asking for?

I am making the same suggestions to the Board that were made last year, and, indeed, virtually every year in the last decade, in hopes you will consider these thoughts as you finalize the 2014-15 budget.

- 1) Vancouver Schools should set minimum staffing levels for school libraries. Students in all schools need and deserve access to strong library programs.
- 2) The Board should reconsider past cuts, such as the Teacher-Librarian Consultant position, as well as past and proposed cuts to Library/Media staff that support the work of school librarians. School libraries are changing, and successful change requires support.
- 3) Vancouver Schools should address the inequalities in access to digital technologies in the library. School libraries are about access to information and stories, whether in print or online. All teacher-librarians need the tools to teach digital literacy skills to our students.
- 4) Please consider not cutting the \$50,000 to library budgets.

As a parent, and a strong library supporter, I am asking the Board to remember that libraries, along with everyone else, have suffered a decade of drastic cuts. I am asking the board to please consider all of these points when they pass the budget for the 2014/2015 school year.

Thank you.

Carrie Bercic
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