



BOARD OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 61 (GREATER VICTORIA)
556 BOLESKINE ROAD, VICTORIA, BC V8Z 1E8
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April 28, 2014

The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fassbender:

RE: School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) Funding Needs

The Greater Victoria Board of Education maintains an unwavering commitment to provide high quality educational programs and services to our students. The costs of providing this high quality education exceed the level of funding that the Provincial Government is providing. This has gone on for more than ten years and is becoming a critical shortfall. Further reductions and downloading of costs are stripping away the essential services that we need to provide for our students to be successful and competitive in the 21st century.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the Greater Victoria School District engaged in an extensive public consultation process to consider budget options to address a deficit of \$1.8 million. The options included the proposed relocation of the Sundance Elementary School program and closing the facility; reducing schools, operations and maintenance and department supplies budgets; closing the district resource centre; relocating the girl's alternative program; eliminating school learning mentors and reducing administrative support positions. Being forced to consider reduction options is contrary to the feedback received from our education partner groups and the public. The input received from the consultative process has clearly indicated the need for increased funding to effectively address the learning needs of our students. The cost of providing special education services is but one example of the challenges faced by our School District. We, as Trustees, have seen an increase in the level of stress placed on staff as they strive to ensure student success in the absence of sufficient resources.

The years of underfunding have eroded our ability to provide a robust quality education system. As co-governors of the public education system, we need government to work proactively with Trustees to develop a funding system that fairly and equitably supports our students and addresses the needs of our communities regardless of economic circumstances. The Province must increase its investment in education to ensure that our students receive the best education possible in the 21st century.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Orcheron'.

Peg Orcheron
Board Chair

Cc: Board of Trustees

Sherri Bell, Superintendent of Schools
All BC Boards of Education, c/o BCSTA
Carole James, MLA Victoria-Beacon Hill
Rob Fleming, MLA Victoria-Swan Lake
Maurine Karagianis, MLA Esquimalt-Royal Roads
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Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
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