



April 8th, 2015

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

Honourable Michael de Jong
Minister of Finance
PO BOX 9048 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fassbender and Minister de Jong,

I am writing on behalf of the West Vancouver Board of Education, to express our grave concern about your recent direction to Boards of Education to find an additional \$29 million in administrative savings for 2015/2016, and further savings in 2016/17 and 2017/18. In our district, this measure translates to \$333,668 in 2015/16 and a further \$621,313 in each of the subsequent years. We wish to express particular concern about the order to find additional savings in the second and third years under this directive, and we ask that you revisit and rescind this decision prior to the March 2016 funding announcement.

Our Board of Education and our staff have been extremely prudent managers of the precious and limited resources provided to educate the children in our district, and we are always working to provide the necessary programming and supports to ensure continued student success. We have worked diligently to find savings both through shared services agreements with local community partners and other school districts. No operational area has been spared in our search to find additional savings to offset the cost pressures we are facing; at all times, our decisions have been guided by a commitment to direct diminishing resources to the classroom. It is also important to note that in our experience, the ability to be proactive and to make decisions locally has been a major factor in our success; not all services can be shared without a subsequent negative impact in quality local programming and delivery.

Despite the enormous efforts we have made, along with other Boards of Education, we are dismayed and extremely disappointed to find the government publicly suggesting that there is waste in what is arguably already a very lean system. In fact, had it not been for the prudence with which we have managed diminishing resources and the foresight required to create additional revenue streams, we would already be facing cuts in programs and services on a much greater scale.

For several years, staff has worked diligently to reduce administrative costs in direct response to unfunded cost pressures imposed by the government. This cannot continue without serious implications on the high quality system we have worked so hard to build in this province, and will have dire consequences if the government continues to ignore the realities of inflation, increased costs to Boards for provincially controlled Medical Services Plan premiums, rapidly rising Hydro rates and a failure to fully fund contracts for which it has the authority to negotiate.

The citizens of West Vancouver, Lions Bay and Bowen Island elected this Board of Education to uphold, maintain and improve upon a world-class education for students in our district; we are proud of the accomplishments of our staff, parents, students and community partners in this regard. We now respectfully ask that our partners in government embrace their obligation to fully fund public education in order to preserve what we've built and to ensure that British Columbia continues to have a vibrant world class public education system.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Broady, Chair
West Vancouver Board of Education

cc: West Vancouver Board of Education
Chris Kennedy, Superintendent of Schools, West Vancouver
Rob Millard, WVTa President
Bruce Scott, WVMEA Business Manager
Judy Duncan, WVAA President
Abbie Milavsky, WVPAC President-
All BC Boards of Education
Ralph Sultan, MLA West Vancouver - Capilano
Jordan Sturdy, MLA West Vancouver - Sea to Sky
Rob Fleming, NDP Education Critic