



# Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

1580 West Broadway

Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

Telephone: 604-713-5000

June 8, 2020

**Honourable Rob Fleming**

Ministry of Education

PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

E: [educ.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:educ.minister@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Minister Fleming,

At the May 25, 2020 meeting, the Vancouver Board of Education passed the following motion:

*That the Vancouver Board of Education writes to the Minister of Education requesting an explanation as to why the province has not approved any major capital expansion and seismic projects in response to the District's 2020/21 Five-Year Capital Plan submission. Particularly, given the Board has followed the Ministry's, April 12th, 2019 new approach to long-term capital planning for boards of education with a particular 'requirement' on community consultation.*

Our Board has certainly appreciated the opportunity to meet with you this year to have discussions regarding the Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP). In addition, we want to thank the Ministry of Education for past major capital plan approvals, particularly for the Seismic Mitigation Program.

Following the Ministry's new guidelines from April 2019, our Board has been actively working on the recommendations in our draft Long Range Facilities Plan, to move away from focusing on 'capacity utilization' and shifting to a focus of robust community consultation, including Indigenous communities, to ensure our District's Long Range Facilities Plan reflects the needs and desires of the broad community.

Of key importance is our "Building for Modern Learning" engagement with the public to learn about ways we can use VSB buildings across our city for the learning needs of students today and in the future. We have completed Phase I of this work, with over 4,000 participants, but have had to postpone the more in depth Phase II discussions. We have also considered the implications of the new guidelines, have created a preferred school size working group and continue to increase the number of childcare spaces in schools.

**Board of Education Trustees:**

Janet Fraser – Board Chair

Carmen Cho – Vice-Chair

Fraser Ballantyne Lois Chan-Pedley

Estrellita Gonzalez Oliver Hanson

Barb Parrott Jennifer Reddy Allan Wong

In your March 5, 2020 'Ministry Response to the Annual Five-Year Capital Plan submission for 2020/21' letter, we are disappointed to learn that none of our Major Capital Project requests, from either the Seismic Mitigation Program (SMP) or Expansions (EXP) categories, were approved. Our Board would like to have an explanation of this response in light of our efforts to comply with the Ministry's new guidelines.

We look forward to continued dialogue on this important issue, recognizing that the Ministry and school districts are co-governors for public education.

With Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Fraser".

Janet Fraser  
Board Chair

cc: VBE Trustees  
Suzanne Hoffman, Superintendent  
J. David Green, Secretary-Treasurer