



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

1580 West Broadway

Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

Telephone: 604-713-5000

Fax: 604-713-5049

2008 February 20

The Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Education and Deputy Premier
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Bond:

I am writing to request consideration to issues raised by the Parent Advisory Council for the General Gordon Elementary School. The issues relate to the proposed replacement of this facility as recommended during the due-diligence review within the project's seismic remediation process.

Many of the issues raised in this case are also relevant to other proposed and current projects within the district. The Board recognizes the Ministry's policy on such issues but is asking herein for clarification and consideration for change to the current facility area and funding standards.

The first of these is in respect to the space standards and the comparative method used by the Ministry to determine replacement costs versus upgrade costs. It is felt that because many of the schools in the Vancouver District were designed under different guidelines in which larger amenities were allowed, that such a school area should be considered when the cost of a replacement facility is determined. These areas include covered play areas, cloak rooms, storage areas, wide corridors and multi-purpose space. Conversely, it is also believed that the life-cycle renewal costs of the facility upgrade should be taken into account during this same comparative study and if the upgrade cost is deemed as the least expensive alternative then those same life cycle renewal costs should be funded as part of the seismic upgrade.

Further clarification is also requested regarding facility area standards in light of the Ministry's policy with respect to community use. Many of the schools in Vancouver utilize the space they have in the existing school to accommodate before and after school care. The removal of this space due to a reduced replacement size will not allow us to maintain the existing service within the school. In this respect, we also request clarification regarding the issue of capacity calculations in reference to the policy to provide for such community services and the recent information provided in the throne speech in consideration of full school-day Kindergarten for the three to five year olds.

Board of School Trustees:

.../2

Clarence Hansen - Chairperson

Carol Gibson - Vice-Chairperson

Allen Blakey Ken Denike Eleanor Gregory

Sharon Gregson Don Lee Allan Wong

Shirley M. Wong

In addition to the issues raised above regarding area standards, the Board also requests consideration to an increased unit rate for construction to address the sustainability agenda of the provincial government. The current school construction rates do not currently recognize the mandated requirement to achieve LEED gold. We believe an appropriate adjustment needs to be made in the base rate and not as a contingency determined after the final design of the project is complete.

Finally, I would like to bring to your attention the issue of the City of Vancouver Heritage Registry and Commission. Many of the existing facilities in the School Board inventory are listed in the registry and have been evaluated as having considerable heritage significance. Consequently, many interest groups would rather the buildings be retained rather than replaced. The current seismic mediation program does not recognize the heritage aspects of buildings when comparing the costs to replace or upgrade. Consequently, the contradictory results of a due-diligence review may determine the most cost effective approach is to demolish the existing heritage building. We ask that consideration be given to fund the additional costs to retain buildings of significant historical value rather than to replace them. Staff is currently working with the City and Commission to establish acceptable standards of retention.

This item is on the Board Standing Committee agenda for March 4th, 2008 and it would be useful to us to receive your response prior to that time.

Yours truly,



Mr. Clarence Hansen
Chairperson
On Behalf of the Board of Education of
School District No. 39 (Vancouver)