



# Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association

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## **2017-2018 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

presented to  
Vancouver Board of Education  
Committee III / V



**April 24, 2017**

## **VSTA RESPONSE TO 2017-2018 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association welcomes the opportunity to make comment on the proposed Vancouver School Board budget for the 2017-2018 school year.

On the whole, we are struck by the reality that even in the context of a provincial election only a few weeks away, a large school district in British Columbia is again faced with making cuts to educational programs for students. It is a sad state of affairs that any cuts need to be made and something that Secondary Teachers in Vancouver dearly hope is remembered by the voting public on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

As all of us at this venue have heard time and time again, Adult Education in the Vancouver School Board often exists as either a last stop or a first stop on an education path for students. For students who have had, for a variety of reasons, many of them socioeconomic, no success in the regular school system, Adult Education can be a haven that keeps the institution of education moving forward in their lives and begins for young adults, a path to success. For recent immigrants and adults motivated to improve their situation, Adult Education can be a place to gain the prerequisites that stand as requirements for a new beginning. That the Vancouver School Board needs to contemplate cuts to Adult Education is a sorry state of affairs, and this needs to be laid straight at the feet of the current provincial government. The Select Standing Committee on Finance, a body representing all parties of the Legislature, recommended that funding for adult education be restored, no doubt recognizing the penny-wise, pound foolish nature of cutting funding to a group of students who are actively pursuing their improvement in the economy. It is not lost on Vancouver Secondary Teachers that the same government that chose to eliminate the Education Guarantee is the government who promoted the change in name from the Vancouver School Board to the Vancouver Board of Education, at the time touting the benefits of a community-wide Educational organization, dedicated to the provision of education for all citizens of Vancouver.

Secondary Teachers in Vancouver are perplexed at the role of the online budget survey. The results of the survey, that contained questions that seemed to pit programs and services against others, will not be available until immediately before the Board makes final deliberations on the budget and if the survey is viewed as an important component of the consultation process, there does not seem to be an opportunity for Stakeholders to comment on the results in a fashion that might make a difference in the Board's deliberations.

Regarding specific proposals in the budget document, the VSTA believes, as we stated in our comments at the Committee III/V two weeks ago, that paying \$90,000 to rejoin the British Columbia School Trustees Association is not good value for the advocacy dollar. It is certain that public schools and indeed all public institutions need strong advocates in the fiscal climate created by the current provincial government. What is not certain is the benefit that \$90,000 (roughly the cost of a teacher) will do to create better conditions for any students in Vancouver.

The VSTA is concerned that the continued focus on rental revenue, mainly from filming will further burden administrative staff with duties that do not focus on the improvement of educational outcomes of students. The VSTA receives regular contact from teachers concerned with the amount of time that site-based administration devotes to securing and managing film crews at school sites.

Vancouver teachers are happy that the Board has the opportunity to spend up to \$56 million of notional funding from the CEF on increased staffing for the next school year, thanks largely to the Supreme Court of Canada and teachers' own sacrifices. It is entirely disconcerting to note that if this court decision and resulting Memorandum of Agreement had not materialized when it had, that this budget would face a deficit of over \$10 million, an amount that we have been told would have come largely from programming for students. Secondary teachers look forward to productive and collaborative discussions on building timetables in schools that meet the requirements of the restored language, therefore increasing the inclusive educational opportunities for all students in our classrooms.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory Brown', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rory Brown  
President