



October 13, 2026

Vancouver Board of Education
Attention: Board of Education Trustees
Vancouver, BC

Dear Trustees,

Re: Vote of Non-Confidence by VSTA Membership

We are writing to inform you that, last week after an unprecedented motion from our Council, Vancouver Secondary teachers engaged in a vote of non-confidence in VBE Superintendent Helen McGregor and Secretary-Treasurer Flavia Coughlan. 80% of secondary teachers participated in this vote with 98.6% voting in favour of a statement of non-confidence.

This vote is in response to concerns secondary teachers have raised about a number of decisions over the last four years and the impact these decisions have had on students, staff, and school communities. We do so respectfully and with a shared commitment to the success of Vancouver students and Vancouver's public schools.

Teachers recognize the challenges involved in governing a large and complex school district. We appreciate the work trustees undertake on behalf of students, families, and communities. Our intention is not to criticize, but rather to bring forward observations from classrooms and schools that we believe warrant careful consideration.

Over the past several years, staffing levels, student supports, and learning conditions have become increasingly pressing issues. This year, these challenges have become particularly acute when classes were reorganized or closed after the school year had begun, creating uncertainty for students and disrupting established learning environments. Many students across the district have been unable to access courses at their home schools or complete their timetables. Students - including those in Grades 8, 9, and 10 - have also been pushed toward spare blocks or online learning when in-person classes were unavailable. In many cases, students are unable to access core academic courses - not just electives.

Of particular concern, courses have been closed while the district reports a \$15 million surplus. These budgeting decisions are limiting student choice and restricting access to the courses students need to graduate. From the perspective of those working directly with students every day, there is a troubling disconnect between the district's financial position and the resources reaching classrooms. From teachers' perspective, current budgeting decisions do not reflect the level of funding secondary schools require to meet students' needs effectively.

These budgeting choices also affect the conditions within the classes that remain. Effective support for students requires learning conditions that allow teachers to respond to the full range of needs in their classrooms. This includes smaller class sizes, along with linear preparation time for teachers to plan

lessons, adapt instruction, assess learning, and coordinate appropriate supports. Without these conditions, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide every student with the attention and opportunities they need to succeed.

Addressing these challenges requires meaningful consultation and engagement. A strong public education system relies on transparent decision-making and authentic dialogue among trustees, staff, families, students, and community partners. Teachers value opportunities to contribute their professional expertise and believe that decisions are strengthened when those closest to students have meaningful opportunities to inform the discussion before major decisions are finalized.

Recent discussions regarding emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence initiatives, have also highlighted the importance of engagement and communication. Teachers support innovation when it serves student learning and is implemented thoughtfully. At the same time, many teachers believe that significant changes should be accompanied by comprehensive consultation, training, professional learning opportunities, and clear communication with staff and families.

These concerns come from a place of care, not conflict. Teachers remain deeply committed to Vancouver students and to the success of public education. Every day, teachers work to create inclusive, supportive, and engaging learning environments despite increasing complexities and challenges.

We respectfully ask trustees to:

1. Prioritize stable staffing and learning conditions for students.
2. Review the impact of class closures and reorganizations on student success.
3. Strengthen supports for inclusive education and vulnerable learners.
4. Recommit to meaningful stakeholder engagement and consultation.
5. Ensure that teachers' input is meaningfully incorporated into significant initiatives and policy decisions before they are finalized.

We believe that trustees, teachers, families, and district leaders share many common goals. By working together through open dialogue and mutual respect, we can better address the challenges facing our schools and ensure that students receive the supports and opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns and for your ongoing service to public education.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.

Carmen Schaedeli, Carl Janze, and John Silver

In-House Table Officers

Vancouver Secondary Teachers' Association