



January 25, 2013

Honourable Minister, Don McRae
Ministry of Education
P.O. Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Honourable Minister McRae:

Re: 2012/2013 Recalculated Funding Allocations

First let me thank you for your response to the concerns expressed by the BCSTA and most Boards of Education in the Province, including this Board, about the Ministry's request to submit savings plans by January 15, 2013. We understand most Boards have responded by indicating they are unable to do so and that you have advised the BCSTA that it is not a requirement that savings plans be submitted.

No doubt the response from so many Boards of Education outlining their budget constraints and uncertainty with respect to matters such as funding teacher pension plan requirements and potential wage settlements has been instructive with respect to the financial pressure being felt by the education system throughout the Province.

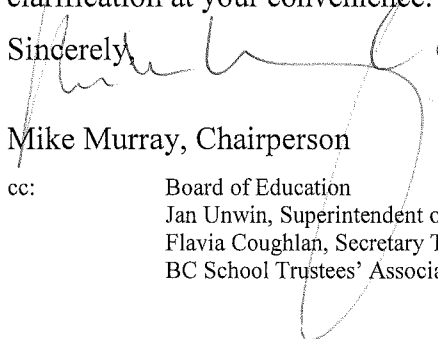
Our Board members have subsequently been advised by the Ministry about the 2012/13 recalculated funding allocations. Of course we appreciate the release of holdback funding since it is a requirement to meet our obligations through the rest of the year. Having said that we have some questions for clarification.

We understand the Ministry has not disbursed all of the available holdback funds and is retaining \$26.3 million "to address budget pressures and/or unanticipated enrolment growth in the February and May enrolment counts." Our Board seeks clarification from the Ministry to ensure that language means the funds are being retained to address budget pressures within the education system in the current year and that they will ultimately be disbursed to Boards of Education as Operating Grant funding for 2012/13. We would be very concerned if funding intended for education was redirected elsewhere in government or to future budget years given the pressures we are facing outlined in our previous correspondence.

We are equally concerned funding previously provided by the Province for BCPSEA will now be drawn from funds that were originally intended for distribution to Boards of Education, further eroding our ability to address the pressures identified above. We value the work of BCPSEA on our behalf and would argue the need for even greater support from BCPSEA at local bargaining tables if there is to be a greater degree of local bargaining. Of course this additional support can only be provided at a cost and we look to government to provide that additional funding outside of the envelope intended for distribution to School Districts.

Thank you for considering our perspective on these matters. We look forward to receiving the requested clarification at your convenience.

Sincerely,


Mike Murray, Chairperson

cc: Board of Education
Jan Unwin, Superintendent of Schools
Flavia Coughlan, Secretary Treasurer
BC School Trustees' Association for Dissemination to all School Boards