Ken Clarkson

Public education is for the common good of us all and a cornerstone of democracy.

Neil Postman said, "Public education isn't important because it serves the public, it is important because it creates the public."

The education of our children should be of concern to everyone- whether you have children or not- because it provides value to society as a whole. In an ideal world this room would be filled with concerned citizen who neither work in the public school system nor have children who attend it.

Democracy and an educated citizenry go hand in hand, every government makes choices and sets priorities. This government is making a conscientious choice to under fund public education.

Boards across the province are being forced, and when you look at the alternatives, we really are being forced, to consider options contrary to the input we have received from the public and our educational partners. The feedback has clearly indicated the need for increased funding. The reality is without it we will see further deterioration of what has been a world class public education system. The question we all ask; How can this system be sustained given the current circumstances?

Some say the government's failure to adequately fund public education is because they wish to destroy it. Education is being commodified in to a profit center. Bottom line priorities alone matter. Preparing children for the future doesn't count. Our children's education is being sacrificed on the altar of money and power.

I want to ensure you, the trustees who sit at this table and the dedicated and committed staff who work with us, are all doing the absolute best we can with the resources we have.

 As trustees, we have and will continue to express our concerns to government for they are our masters. But we serve another master; you, the public citizenry of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows. We need you to express your concerns to government, nothing will change until the government hears from you.

Our children deserve it, our democracy depends on it.