



Vancouver Board of Education

School District No. 39

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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December 19, 2014

Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, Stn Pro. Govt.
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fassbender,

RE: Queen Mary Elementary Seismic Upgrade and Partial Replacement

At the regular Board meeting on December 15, 2014, the Vancouver Board of Education passed a motion to call on the Ministry of Education to cover a loss of funding regarding the Queen Mary Elementary school seismic project due to the anomaly of the Province switching from HST to GST/PST.

The change from HST to GST/PST has had a significant effect on this project. The taxes increased from \$250,030 to \$762,717, a variance of \$512,687. As a result of this additional cost, the following changes were made to the project:

- The footprint of the school was reduced from what was originally shown during design development;
- The Early Learning Space was eliminated due to the need to decrease building area;
- The music room and resource area were moved to the basement of the Heritage building. They now occupy spaces that were going to be left unfinished and used for storage;
- Millwork was removed from some of the classrooms;
- Landscape elements were either reduced or eliminated; and
- Project reserves have been reduced leaving minimal reserves for construction contingencies.

The reserves for the Queen Mary project include a procurement reserve of 5%, or \$833,432, which remains intact as instructed by the Ministry. We question the continued need for the entire amount of the reserve as all the design work and City negotiations are complete and minimal procurement work is remaining. Accordingly, the procurement reserve could be used to fund the additional costs related to the change from HST to GST/PST.

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Board of School Trustees:

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Janet Fraser – Vice-Chairperson

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This tax change has affected a number of other projects with increases in additional taxes of \$506,379 for L'Ecole Bilingue, \$457,039 for General Gordon, and \$378,300 for "International Village".

The scope of school seismic upgrade projects should not be in jeopardy as a result of changes in provincial tax structures that are beyond the control of school boards.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher Richardson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Christopher Richardson
Trustee Chairperson

cc: VBE Trustees
Vancouver MLA's
Gregor Robertson, Mayor and City Council
Dr. Steve Cardwell, Superintendent
Rick Krowchuk, Secretary Treasurer