



North Vancouver Teachers' Association

Local 44 British Columbia Teachers' Federation

L'association des enseignantes et enseignants de Vancouver Nord

October 25, 2011.

Dear Parent Advisory Council Chair,

Re: NVTa/WVTA Letter to Parents Regarding Provincial Underfunding

Enclosed is a copy of our joint open letter from the public school teachers of North Vancouver and West Vancouver to parents regarding the underfunding of public education, the lack of progress in provincial bargaining, and the government's lack of commitment to public education.

While our two great school districts each have excellent programs and supportive staff, the open letter outlines our concerns regarding public education underfunding, the challenges underfunding presents to school districts and those who work tirelessly to make our students' education as meaningful as possible.

Our letter encourages parents to be aware of the effects of underfunding, and to work with teachers, administrators and our school districts to advocate for a renewed commitment to public education.

We would like to partner with parents in making our school districts even better, as teachers sincerely believe that public education is an investment in creating thoughtful, caring, and critical thinking adults who have the skills and the confidence to meet the challenges and opportunities their futures hold for them.

Copies of the open letter will be given to each school's PAC Chair and to the DPAC Executive.

We encourage school PACs to discuss the letter with parents and teachers, and we welcome and appreciate your support in advocating for increased funding and a renewed commitment to public education.

If you have any questions about the letter or would like more information, please feel free to contact me by phone at 604-988-3224, or by email at dstorms@nv44.bc.ca.

Thank you very much.

Daniel Storms
President

North Vancouver Teachers' Association



North Vancouver Teachers' Association



West Vancouver Teachers' Association

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The teachers of North and West Vancouver value our partnership with parents, and we know that it is critical in helping each child succeed in school.

Public education on the North Shore provides a first-class and comprehensive K-12 programme to students, both in terms of the quality of instruction as well as in providing an inclusive, supportive environment for every student.

Teachers are committed to improving the learning conditions for their students. It is our collective pride in being teachers, our passion for teaching and learning, and our belief in public education as a social good, which impels us to write to you to express our concerns.

Everyone is working harder than ever to meet your child's needs each and every day; however, with the lack of adequate and predictable funding, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the levels of support and service for which our districts are known. It has led to increased class sizes, dwindling resources, reduced support for students with special needs, and the loss of many learning specialist teachers.

We, as teachers, consistently speak out, lobby, and advocate for improvements on an ongoing basis. Currently, we are engaged in bargaining, trying to achieve improvements to conditions in our schools along with a fair and reasonable salary and benefits package.

We hoped to have bargained improved conditions for students this fall; however, despite many months of discussion, there has been very little progress, and no support from the government to spur on negotiations. As a result, teachers voted in June to take job action.

Nevertheless, we want to assure you that we are in our classrooms focusing on your children's learning, rather than the ever-increasing number of administrative tasks that take time away from our teaching.

Teachers are in class as usual teaching, preparing lessons, planning, and assessing our students. We will also be taking attendance, helping students who need assistance before and after class, and dealing with emergencies to ensure the safety of students.

In addition, teachers will contact parents if there is any concern with a student; likewise, parents can contact teachers to discuss concerns or questions they may have.

Our hope is that a settlement will be reached at the bargaining table as we work hard to achieve a collective agreement that provides the guarantees our students need.

We need everyone from parents, school principals, superintendents, and school trustees, to publicly state their own concerns about public education underfunding, and the need for renewed funding and a real commitment to public education.

Every modern, progressive jurisdiction in the industrialized world knows that public education is a key indicator of future prosperity.

Therefore, we urge you to engage directly with your classroom teacher, school principal, school trustee(s), school and district Parent Advisory Council (PAC), and local provincial MLAs to advocate for renewed investment in public education to meet the present and future needs of the next generation and our province.

If you have any questions, please talk to your child's teacher and go to bctf.ca, for additional information.

Sincerely,

Daniel Storms, President
North Vancouver Teachers' Association

Robert Millard, President
West Vancouver Teachers' Association