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Learning for a Lifetime

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EDUCATION**

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September 12, 2019

The Honourable Rob Fleming
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Fleming:

On June 11, 2019, the School District passed the 2019 Eligible School Sites Proposal (ESSP) Resolution and subsequently notified all Municipalities and Villages of the changes to the School Site Acquisition Charge (SSAC). On July 9, 2019 Port Moody declined to accept the ESSP. Port Moody City Staff's had recommended adoption. This is the second year that Port Moody has declined to adopt the ESSP. The rationale for their decision is stated as they do not have sufficient information in which to make a decision.

This matter with the City of Port Moody, is a continuation from last year, when they in July 2018 they declined to accept the Board's proposed site requirements. At that time, our Secretary-Treasurer met with Port Moody staff and Port Moody Council on July 25 and July 30, 2018 respectively, to provide additional information, in an attempt to resolve the raised concerns. The School District requested the Minister of Education appoint a facilitator as prescribed in Section 574(8) of the Local Government Act on August 2, 2018. A facilitator was appointed on February 21, 2019 and it is the Board's understanding that the facilitator has provided your office with his report.

During this facilitation process, School Board Trustees met formally with Port Moody City Council on February 13, 2019 and discussed several topics including land acquisition costs and the role of the school site acquisition charge in this role. Additionally, an information meeting for all mayors and councillors, from the local governments included in the District, was held on February 19, 2019 to discuss a variety of topics, including enrolment growth and the need for new additional schools and sites and replacement schools (seismic upgrades or full replacement).

Further exacerbating the issue, at an event last week, attended by both municipal mayors and councillors and Board of Education trustees, the Acting Mayor of Port

Moody, in his formal speech, stated that the City of Port Moody expects a 50% increase in population growth over the next twenty years.

In working with the facilitator, the School District was advised that if it compromised and removed one site from the ESSP proposal and renamed a second site, that Port Moody would agree to the revised ESSP. The School District did this, but as noted above, the updated 2019 ESSP proposal was not approved by Port Moody Council.

School District staff have indicated that over the past year, if the new rates had been in effect, based upon the SSAC collected over the past 12 months, the loss of SSAC revenues are approximately \$750,000. As you are aware, a decrease in revenue from this funding stream places the financial burden on all provincial taxpayers and the School District to fund the difference between the actual land acquisition cost and the funds available from SSAC collections. SSAC charges to developers are intended to collect 35% of land acquisition costs. The actual outcome is less than 10%.

The Board of Education intends to continue to work to restore a reciprocal relationship with the Port Moody City Council and to that end, I will be reaching out to establish a meeting with Mayor Vagramov on this topic, and if necessary, a full Board to Council meeting, to seek further clarity and resolution to this matter.

With these facts in mind, and the overwhelming need for increased capacity in all areas of our school district, the Board of Education would like to request that the Ministry of Education expedite the decision regarding the facilitator's 2018 report and impose the proposed SSAC rates as quickly as possible. Likewise, the continued involvement of the facilitator to resolve the 2019 ESSP outcome is also requested.

Yours truly,

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 43 (COQUITLAM)



Barb Hobson
Chair, Board of Education

cc: Board of Education
Patricia Gartland, Superintendent of Schools
Chris Nicolls, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Rob Vagramov, Mayor, City of Port Moody
Tim Savoie, City Manager, City of Port Moody