



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO 47 (POWELL RIVER)

BOARD OF EDUCATION

4351 Ontario Avenue, Powell River, BC V8A 1V3

Telephone: 604 414 2600 Fax: 604 485 6435

Jeanette Scott – Chair, Doug Skinner – Vice-Chair

Steve Formosa, Mary James, Aaron Reid - Trustees

September 11, 2013

via email educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Education

Dear Minister Fassbender:

Re: Savings Plan Development

We are writing to express our concerns regarding your letter of August 26, 2013.

Our Board of Education has been vocal in supporting a wage increase for our CUPE staff. Our concern is that boards have to fund any increase out of our already reduced operating budget.

The following are excerpts from our letter to the Honourable Don McRae, dated December 18, 2012:

“.....We have lived the “savings plan” part of the mandate for years. With declining enrollment each year, we have had to develop an annual saving plan just to maintain service levels..... Over the past ten years we have performed efficiency reviews, redesigned our service delivery model, developed savings through operational cost reductions and have worked to increase and develop additional sources of revenue.....”

You have already asked us to look for savings in our operating budget, and our board, along with all the others in the province, has provided responses indicating we do not have savings without affecting core services.

You have now asked us to go through the process for a second time providing us with a template for considered reductions. While we may be able to find some savings, we can certainly not find all of the savings without affecting what we consider core services.

In reviewing the areas for consideration for reduction, we notice that many of the reductions would come at the expense of CUPE. In essence, you are telling us to find savings to increase CUPE's wages, but at

Page 2

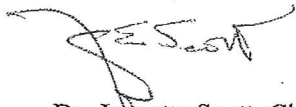
the same time consider reduction of CUPE Pro-D, staffing levels, over-time, benefits, number of part-time and replacement workers as well as elimination of some positions. These measures would have a significant impact on the CUPE work force and negate any wage increase they garner.

It is imperative that we are given a clear definition of "core services" in order to complete the exercise of review for reduction purposes. An example is "Transportation Reduction" – we believe that reduction in transportation to students with special needs, students in poverty and students in remote areas certainly affects the core service of providing an equitable education to all students. Please explain the process for our Board moving forward if we are unable to find any savings.

Considering this is the second time you have asked us to review our operation to find savings, we suggest that government take on the same responsibility to find savings in order to fund a fair CUPE wage increase.

We are committed to working with you to find the best possible solution for our students and staff.

Yours truly



Dr. Jeannette Scott, Chair
Powell River Board of Education

JY/jg

c: D. Ross, President, CUPE 476