



BOARD OF EDUCATION

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May 27, 2016

The Honourable Mike Bernier
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Bernier:

Re: Administrative Savings

The Board of Education of School District No. 46(Sunshine Coast) passed the following motion at our public meeting on May 10, 2016:

“That the Chair write a letter to the Minister on behalf of the board, with respect to the Administrative Savings Plan and our resistance to approve the plan in light of the unfunded exempt staff compensation increases and other costs incurred by districts. This will definitely have an effect on student learning and the services we provide.”

Our Board of Education passed a balanced budget on May 10, 2016 following consultation with our communities and extensive work by our senior staff. We balanced our budget with difficulty even though we have had a small increase in students in the past year. This is due in large part to the requirement of the Ministry of Education that we send back administrative savings in the amount of \$182,072 and pay for the Next Generation Network at a cost of \$143,562.

We have made prudent decisions over several years and have made a practice of sending the majority of any surplus from the previous year’s budget directly out to schools to enhance resources available for the classroom each September. We do not accumulate a surplus to address a future budget shortfall.

Our Board has made these decisions to ensure we keep students a priority each and every year and with each and every budget. Here is a brief summary of the recent Ministry of Education decisions and related policies that have the direct impact of taking funds out of our classrooms:

Administrative Savings - 2015/16	(\$205,044)
Administrative Savings - 2016/17	(\$182,072)
Network Service Costs	(\$143,562)
Exempt Compensation (est.)	(\$289,000)

2016 Impact of Pension Cost Incr. (2004-2015)	(\$828,000)
Pension Cost Decreases (2016)	<u>\$279,647</u>
Total:	(\$1,368,031)

As you can see, Minister, from the example from our very small district, it is an insult to public school boards for you to suggest as you did last month, that the decrease in pension costs for 2016 was an increase to our funding.

We object in the strongest terms to the requirement to submit administrative savings in both the past and next year's budget. We object to the requirement to pay the full costs of the Next Generation Network, a decision made arbitrarily by the Ministry but with dramatic impact on individual districts' ability to keep resources in the classroom. We ask that you shift to a greater cooperative approach for both decision-making and resource allocation and away from communication that simply spins the numbers to enhance government's marketing plan. Our students are too important to be pawns in the discussion of resourcing public education.

Thank you for your consideration and we welcome the opportunity for further discussion on any of the above at any time.

Sincerely,



Betty Baxter
Chair, Board of Education

p.c. Board of Education of School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
Patrick Bocking, Superintendent of Schools
Nicholas Weswick, Secretary-Treasurer
Louise Herle, SCTA President
Marnie Baba, CUPE Local 801 Acting President
Nicholas Simons, MLA, Powell River-Sunshine Coast
All Boards of Education, via BCSTA