



BOARD OF EDUCATION

Delivered by email: teresa.rezansoff@sd51.bc.ca

December 2, 2014

BCSTA Board of Directors
C/O Theresa Rezansoff, BCSTA President
4th floor - 1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 5K9

Dear Teresa:

RE: Co-governance Memorandum of Understanding

The Board of Education of School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) had a chance to review and discuss the proposed MOU with the Ministry of Education at our Committee of the Whole on November 25, 2014. This letter summarizes our feedback and concerns.

We do hope there will be an opportunity for further consultation on this agreement and that our new 2014-2018 board will have the opportunity for further input prior to a symbolic agreement being signed by BCSTA on our behalf.

Our primary concerns are:

- The short timeline for consultation means this language is not necessarily representative of what boards across the province would want in such an agreement. A better process and wider consultation is needed that provides opportunity for all boards' input.
- In the "Whereas" section items D. and E., there is reference to cooperation and a harmonious, collaborative, coordinated approach. Although this sounds good, our board does not agree that this is always the reality. BCSTA is an advocacy organization created to work on behalf of boards in the province. There must be an understanding that boards will sometimes disagree with the Ministry, and have the responsibility to advocate for different positions when that happens.

- If the Ministry is to sign this agreement, there must be something in it to assure boards that there will be no more surprise policy announcements with no opportunity to discuss or give input to proposed changes. In the past we have learned of policy changes in the media with no notification at all. If there is no clause committing to improving this lack of communication, then this agreement is no different than similar agreements signed in the past.
- In the “Implementation” section, there is reference to “subsidiary protocol agreements” and “specific priorities” that do not specify any process or parameters. We would prefer some definitions or limiting guidelines listed here so this phrase cannot be used to nullify the requirement for any consultation by the parties, or to undermine respect for dialogue in decision-making.

We would be remiss in making any of the above comments without highlighting that the unexpected termination of the BCPSEA Board of Directors on July 31, 2013 was extremely damaging to the relationship between boards of education and the Ministry of Education. This remains unresolved. The continuation of a provincially appointed public administrator for BCPSEA is a huge barrier to the spirit of co-governance. There must be a resolution to this situation, and representation of boards of education in the governance of BCPSEA, for the spirit of co-governance in the province to be possible at all, and to create the goodwill necessary for any agreement to have a positive impact.

Thanks you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Betty Baxter
Chair

P.c: Patrick Bocking, Superintendent of Schools
Nicholas Weswick, Secretary-Treasurer
Board of Education of School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast)
Nicholas Simons, MLA
All boards, via BCSTA