

## **LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM VSB CHAIR AND TRUSTEE, PATTI BACCHUS:**

October 23, 2013

Hello Strathcona parents, neighbours and staff:

Strathcona was identified as the first school on the list of Vancouver seismic upgrades in 2005 when the provincial government committed to upgraded all at-risk schools by 2020. In 2008 it was named by then-Premier Gordon Campbell as one of three pilot project schools for "Neighbourhood Centres of Learning" funding to provide space in the upgraded school for community use.

The two other schools were Queen Mary and General Gordon. We have signed Project Agreements for those and we are moving ahead with design and construction. Yet we're still waiting for an agreement for Strathcona that will enable us to move this long-overdue project forward.

We were very disappointed to hear that Treasury Board has requested yet another engineering report be completed prior to approval. We have let the Minister know our concerns and we even toured him through the school last week.

We will continue to advocate for moving this project forward and we support you in doing the same.

Thank you for your work on this!

Patti Bacchus  
VSB Chair & Trustee

## **LETTER FROM MLA JENNY KWAN TO HON PETER FASSBENDER, MINISTER OF EDUCATION:**

October 24, 2013

Minister Fassbender:

Last week the students and staff of Lord Strathcona Elementary School were among the thousands of British Columbians who participated in the Great British Columbia Shake Out to practice emergency preparedness in case of a major earthquake. While students and staff are doing their best to put into place and practice the procedures that should be followed during a major seismic event, they do so knowing that the buildings do not meet modern building safety standards for surviving a major seismic event. This in spite of the fact that it has been 9 years since former Premier Gordon Campbell announced provincial funding for seismic upgrades for schools across the province.

The students, staff and families of Strathcona want to know when the government of British Columbia will do its part and end the delays and start construction of these essential seismic upgrades. Back in April, your predecessor indicated that the Ministry of Education was waiting on a Value Analysis before proceeding on this project. When I raised this issue with you this past July in the Legislature during the Ministry of Education Estimates Debate, you responded that the Value Analysis was complete and that final approval would be given within weeks.

Three months later, the seismic upgrade process remains stalled. It is our understanding that there is now yet another requirement for another analysis. As you may be aware, repeated announcements have been made about the seismic upgrading for Lord Strathcona Elementary School. It's been 9 years since the initial announcement. Upgrades for Queen Mary and General Gordon schools, which were announced at the same time, have gone ahead while Lord Strathcona Elementary School have not. I reiterate my request to confirm the specific timeline for approval so that our community can be assured that this project will move forward without further delay. School officials are anxious to put in

place the necessary plans to get the school ready for the construction work to begin the long-awaited renovations and seismic upgrades for this high-risk school. I will look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Jenny Kwan, MLA Vancouver-Mount Pleasant

#### **QUOTES FROM PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS:**

"My child is grown up, but many of my neighbours have children attending this school. I want these children, many of whom are economically and socially disadvantaged, to at least be safe at school."

"It seems that Strathcona is continually treated as a ghetto and that it's residents are not worth consideration although we pay taxes, just like everyone else."

"Protect children by protecting schools."

"In Japan, earthquake safety is treated very seriously and public facilities are upgraded constantly. It's awfully shameful that a school designated as high risk would be lower priority for upgrades. Vancouver is due for a quake. Fix the school before it happens."

"Our children deserve a safe environment in which to learn."

"It's ridiculous that children should learn in a building that is not safe in an earthquake. Especially when children who don't live in affluent neighbourhoods don't have the same. This is completely unethical!"

"It's not our children's fault their school is designated heritage, or that they sit in an NDP riding. Do the right thing and make this high risk school safe for the 575 little children learning there."

"School buildings should be safe for our children."