

## **NORTH VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 44**

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January 22, 2007

Honourable Shirley Bond  
Minister of Education and Deputy Premier  
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Bond:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the North Vancouver School District, congratulations on the launch of the *StrongStart* early learning centres in 16 locations throughout the Province. As you are aware, the North Vancouver School District has consistently demonstrated leadership in the development of early learning initiatives and has proven to be an innovator in forging strong community partnerships and educational alliances in the area of early childhood education. As such, we are highly supportive of the Ministry's increased responsibility regarding early childhood initiatives that seek to provide the children of our Province with the best possible start in school and in life.

As part of our commitment to early childhood learning, in 2005, the North Vancouver School District launched the very successful preschool initiative *Early Learning Foundations* to help preschool-age children enter school ready to learn and succeed in kindergarten and beyond. These preschool programs encourage a child's physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development and include concepts vital for success in kindergarten including self-control, respect for others, and a sense of confidence and competence. When children begin school ready to learn, they develop habits, attitudes and perspectives that are much more likely to allow them to succeed in school and later to become responsible, productive members of society.

As I am sure you will recall, during your recent visit on December 11, 2006, John Lewis, Superintendent of Schools, and I discussed the possibility of receiving financial support from the Ministry of Education to assist us with the costs associated with our *Early Learning Foundations* program. Costs incurred to date include facilities upgrades, the RPF process developed to initiate these preschools now operating in nine locations, administrative support including program development and more. We estimate that our total contribution with respect to this initiative is approximately \$100,000. It is through innovative and visionary measures that we have managed our costs so effectively.

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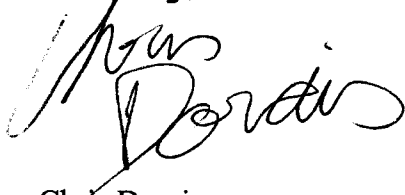
While we are very supportive of the *StrongStart* program, we agree that parents need a variety of choices to meet the range of childcare and early childhood education demands and we feel that the innovative *Early Learning Foundations* initiative is equally worthy of Ministry recognition. We would respectfully request an amount equal to the *StrongStart* single location award be provided to the North Vancouver School District to support the many children currently taking advantage of the *Early Learning Foundations* program now operating in multiple locations. As these centres have already been established, ongoing costs would be minimized and a contribution in the amount of \$90,000 from the Ministry of Education would provide long-term support for these valued programs while also enabling us to expand opportunities for early childhood learning and support.

A grant in the amount of \$90,000 could provide additional spaces for those children most in need of a preschool experience. Our research has shown that there are many children who, for a variety of reasons, are not exposed to a quality educational experience prior to arriving in kindergarten and often, these are the children who would most benefit from this experience. This grant would also enable us to provide facilities upgrades to accommodate improved community access to schools for the purpose of early learning.

I am enclosing an *Early Learning Foundations* brochure for your information and invite you to review our program in greater detail on our website at [www.nvsg44.bc.ca](http://www.nvsg44.bc.ca).

We were pleased to note your support of our *Early Learning Foundations* initiative during your visit and we look forward to receiving an affirmative response to our request for the much-needed resources required to deliver this quality early childhood experience to our young people. Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,



Chris Dorais  
Chairperson, Board of School Trustees

pc: Trustees  
Executive