

NORTH VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 44

721 Chesterfield Avenue, North Vancouver, BC V7M 2M5
Tel 604 903-3444 Fax 604 903-3445 www.nvsd44.bc.ca

December 21, 2007

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

Dear Minister Bond,

Re: Capital Funding for Keith Lynn Alternate School

I am writing on behalf of the North Vancouver Board of Education to request that school facilities housing alternative programs be eligible for funding through the capital funding program.

Our School District has an incredible alternative program called the Keith Lynn Alternative Secondary School that has been providing much needed services to students throughout our school district on the North Shore for approximately thirty (30) years. Keith Lynn serves as an alternate opportunity for students up to the age of 16 who are currently not achieving success in standard program schools and have been identified as being at risk to achieve graduation.

Keith Lynn Alternative Secondary School offers an academic program for 120 students in grades 8, 9, & 10 and has a mandate to get students back into standard program schools as they progress to grades 11 and 12. Students enrolled at Keith Lynn often have learning disabilities and/or behavioral problems and are working on an Individual Education Plan. It is a unique student population that is served well by dedicated and creative staff.

This program is currently offered at the former Keith Lynn Elementary School, a facility that was built in 1915. This facility is long past its useful life and is not a candidate for renovation because of its many serious deficiencies. The Keith Lynn school community prefers to stay within this deficient facility because there are few alternatives that the School District can offer and still meet the unique needs of the school.

While deficient, the facility lay-out has worked well for staff and students. Due to the fact that Keith Lynn serves the entire North Shore community rather than a specific neighborhood, it needs to be centrally located and close to bus routes. The current



location provides some seclusion and limits distractions more readily available to students at other secondary schools. The facility has been in disrepair for far too long for both students and staff and requires replacement. Replacement of Keith Lynn is included in our 2008/2009 Capital Plan Submission, but we have been advised that alternative programs are often not considered for capital funding by the Ministry of Education.

One option that has been considered is to co-locate Keith Lynn with another operational high school. However, our standard secondary schools have expressed serious concern with sharing space with Keith Lynn because of the special needs of the student population. The co-location option would not serve Keith Lynn students very well either as it would be difficult to provide separation from the standard secondary school to provide the opportunity for the Keith Lynn students to flourish and to get a real second chance meeting their unique needs.

Another option under consideration is to relocate the program to a closed school. The former Maplewood Elementary is the only centrally-located school that is surplus. While this school is in superior condition to Keith Lynn and close to bus routes, this facility is also in need of capital renovations, which are also not supported under the Ministry of Education's capital funding guidelines. The Board currently has a lease agreement with a private school at this site.

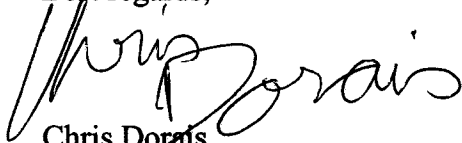
The Board is very proud of the work accomplished at Keith Lynn as it serves a student population at risk of not succeeding academically. We believe that these students deserve equal consideration and access to a high-quality learning environment that will facilitate student achievement. New or renovated facilities can make a significant difference to educational outcomes. An investment in the facilities for this program would send a positive message to the community on the value placed on students with these unique needs.

The exclusion of this type of school from the capital funding program does not seem equitable. These students come from the same student population and deserve equitable facilities from the tax dollars paid by families and others in the community.

Our Board desires the enhancement of the educational experience for these students through equitable facilities and this is something we cannot accomplish without the assistance of the Ministry of Education through capital funding.

We thank you for the consideration of the importance of these financial issues to the Board of Education. We would be happy to introduce this program and facility to yourself and your staff at your convenience. We look forward to your response.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Dorais". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Dorais".

Chris Dorais
Chair, Board of School Trustees

pc: Trustees
Katherine Whittred, MLA
Daniel Jarvis, MLA
Ralph Sultan, MLA
North Vancouver Parent Advisory Committee
BCSTA
David Cubberley, MLA
Michele Henderson, Principal, Keith Lynn
Norma Doig, President Keith Lynn PAC