

March 23, 2010

The Honourable Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid  
Minister of Education  
P.O. Box 9045, STN Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister MacDiarmid:

**RE: School District Use of SMARTTool**

In October 2009, I wrote to you on behalf of the North Vancouver Board of Education regarding the mandated use of SMARTTool required by the Ministry of Citizen's Services to track school district carbon emissions and the administrative burden created by the use of this product. We wish to emphasize once again that this Board supports the broad goals of the Province's Climate Action strategy and understand that *The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*, requires all government ministries, colleges, universities, hospitals and school districts to begin reporting greenhouse gas emissions commencing in January 2010.

As stated in my previous letter to you, the North Vancouver School District has been a leader among school districts in the pursuit of resource conservation for the past decade. Recently we celebrated 40 years of educating students throughout the Lower Mainland in environmental sustainability at the North Vancouver Outdoor School. On February 17, 2010 we held a ground blessing ceremony for the new Environmental Learning Centre at the Outdoor School, a unique, leading edge, eco-sustainable project.

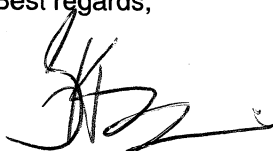
As I advised in my letter of October 22, 2009 we believe that the government's requirement to track school district greenhouse gas emissions could be achieved in a simpler fashion at a minimal cost. Our staff has been tracking greenhouse gas emissions at an aggregate level for many years using an Excel spreadsheet. We added a column to the spreadsheet to insert the conversion factors used in the SMARTTool product. With some minor adjustments suggested by Shared Services BC staff, this spreadsheet now calculates greenhouse gas emissions and arrives at total emissions values consistently with SMARTTool. The NVSD spreadsheet was developed at minimal cost and has no ongoing operating costs unlike SMARTTool which will cost BC school districts \$.82 per pupil or about \$433,000 in 2010 alone. We have not yet been advised what the chargeback will be for future years only that there will be ongoing annual costs.

Although there may be an advantage to some school districts in tracking greenhouse gas emissions at a more micro level building by building, it is my understanding that many school districts believe that tracking greenhouse gas emissions on an aggregate basis is sufficient for their needs. In this case, the NVSD spreadsheet will meet the needs of most school districts. The North Vancouver School District is prepared to share the spreadsheet we developed for tracking greenhouse gas emissions with all school districts in the province at no cost. We seek your support in approaching the Minister of Citizens' Services to either eliminate the chargeback for the use of SMARTTool or support our request (and that of any other school district) to use this in-house spreadsheet instead of SMARTTool.

As I have already mentioned, this spreadsheet is simple to use, requires minimal staff resources to input data at the aggregate level, has no ongoing operating costs and could potentially save the K-12 system over \$400,000 annually. In addition, it is consistent with the Province's direction to school boards to seek administrative efficiencies wherever possible thereby maximizing resources directed towards teaching and learning.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Skinner', written over a horizontal line.

Susan Skinner  
Chairperson  
Board of Education

SHS/mg

cc: John Lewis, Superintendent of Schools, NVSD  
Board of Education of School District No 44 (North Vancouver)  
The Honourable Ben Stewart, Minister of Citizens' Services  
Ralph Sultan, MLA, West Vancouver-Capilano  
Jane Thornthwaite, MLA, North Vancouver-Seymour  
Naomi Yamamoto, MLA, North Vancouver-Lonsdale  
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