

January 18, 2018

The Honourable Katrine Conroy
Minister of Children & Family Development
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8W 1X4

The Honourable Judy Darcy
Minister of Mental Health & Addictions
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8W 1X4

The Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8W 1X4

The Honourable Rob Fleming
Minister of Education
P.O. Box 9045, Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Conroy, Minister Darcy, Minister Dix and Minister Fleming,

RE: Youth Mental Health

The North Vancouver Board of Education would like to acknowledge the continued work and partnership that the ministries provide to schools within the province surrounding the importance of youth mental health issues. On behalf of the community, we thank and congratulate you on the opening of Foundry North Shore and the newly developed Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions.

Positive Mental Health is a cornerstone to engagement and learning. Highlighting and recognizing mental health concerns are first noticed at the school level and we continue to see a great need for supporting our schools in understanding children and youth with social emotional and mental health concerns. Integrated supports at the school level, like those available at Mountainside Secondary, remain a vital link to student success with mental health challenges. The Board of Education is concerned that with the Foundry North Shore opening, ministries will see this as the sole solution for youth mental health issues. While Foundry North Shore is a welcome component to address the mental health needs of youth, it is a service removed from the day to day functioning of students in schools.

The Board has made a significant commitment to the integration of school and community services and supports for positive mental health. In 2014, the North Vancouver Board of Education championed the following carried motion at the provincial BC School Trustees Association:

"that BCSTA urge the provincial government to adopt an 'inter-ministerial' approach to coordinating youth mental health services so that school districts and health authorities have the necessary support to deliver timely and seamless youth mental health services."

The School District continues to support students with programs like "Choices", found within each of our secondary schools, and increase awareness of mental health issues through new curriculum and programs to de-stigmatize mental illness and educate students with tools and resources to help. Augmenting school based support with the community based Foundry North Shore will surely add to the success of our young people, but there is always more that we need to do. It is also important to consider these supports for the full range of learners including students with low incidence developmental or learning disabilities.

.../2





Educating students and staff about mental health and supporting students who are struggling will also help to alleviate issues like bullying within our communities. The sooner we can recognize challenges, the sooner that we can provide the appropriate supports, benefitting the positive well being of society as a whole.

The North Vancouver Board of Education is proud to encourage ministries to continue their good work in creating a greater continuum of support systems within and across schools, while achieving success with Foundry North Shore.

We would be pleased to meet with any appropriate Ministry staff to address any ideas to enable continued support.

Yours truly,

NORTH VANCOUVER
BOARD OF EDUCATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christie Sacré'.

Christie Sacré
Chair

cc Bowinn Ma, MLA North Vancouver-Lonsdale
Ralph Sultan, MLA West Vancouver-Capilano
Jane Thornthwaite, MLA North Vancouver-Seymour
Board of Education, School District No. 44 (North Vancouver)