



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

April 20, 2015

The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8V 9E2

RE: Motions passed at BCSTA AGM regarding Bill 11

Dear Minister Fassbender,

At our Annual General Meeting this past weekend, the membership of the BC School Trustees Association passed the following three motions in regard to Bill 11-2015: The Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2015.

- 1. That BCSTA demand the Government of BC immediately withdraw the sections of Bill 11 that override the authority of democratically elected Boards of Education. Specifically where Bill 11 adds new provisions which broaden the Minister's authority to issue administrative directives, where Bill 11 would amend the special advisor provision, and where shared service providers are designated by the Minister of Education.*
- 2. That BCSTA publicly advocate strongly against the erosion of local Board of Education autonomy in Bill 11.*
- 3. That BCSTA demand an immediate review of the intent of Bill 11 legislation and an opportunity to recommend amendments prior to final adoption as well as the formation of a management partners' working group to participate in the development of any subsequent process or resulting regulations.*

The predominate view of Trustees from across this province is that Bill 11 as written is a challenge to the autonomy and authority of locally elected Boards of Education.

Had BCSTA and our member Boards been provided an opportunity for participation and input such as that given for the accountability framework or curriculum revisions, we may not have arrived at this point. The absence of appropriate consultation and review processes compounds our concerns.

Contrary to the intent and spirit of our recently signed Co-Governance Memorandum of Understanding, the Ministry of Education did not engage Boards in a broad-based consultation process prior to the tabling of this legislation. As the co-governors of the K-12 system, Boards of Education were not provided an opportunity to hear the concerns or intent of government before this legislation was tabled; nor were Boards asked to co-construct appropriate changes to the School Act or other legislation.

Deputy Minister Dave Byng committed to the BCSTA membership at our AGM last Friday that there would be opportunities for both consultation and input regarding the planned regulations that will flow out of this legislation. We now seek your commitment to work with us to first address the areas of concern Trustees have with Bill 11 itself.

If British Columbia is to maintain an outstanding public education system, there must be respect for the individual needs and input of local communities through their elected representatives: BC's Boards of Education. Divesting Boards of their ability to independently and appropriately manage the priorities of their school district threatens the structures and decision making processes that have benefited our students for decades.

Strong Boards of Education provide BC communities with the local representation and decision making that is necessary for us to maintain the flexibility, innovation and adaptability that make our schools both unique and world class.

Bill 11 has just come up for second reading in the House. We ask your support in ensuring this piece of legislation is not adopted as written. Your support for the continued autonomy and authority of locally elected Boards of Education will help ensure our greatest asset, our students, receive the unique educational opportunities they deserve through well managed and locally responsive schools.

Sincerely,



Teresa Rezansoff

President

BC School Trustees Association

cc: Dave Byng, *Deputy Minister of Education*
BCSTA Member Boards of Education