



July 24, 2023

Ref: 290874

Dave Bollen, President
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 409
Email: cupe409@telus.net

Laura Kwong, Chair
School District No. 40 (New Westminster) Parents' Advisory Council
Email: newwestpacchair@gmail.com

Kristie Oxley, President
New Westminster Teachers' Union
Email: lp40@bctf.ca

Dear Dave Bollen, Laura Kwong and Kristie Oxley:

Thank you for your letter of June 6, 2023 addressed to the Honourable Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care, outlining your concerns regarding cooling in School District No. 40 (New Westminster). I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Minister.

Under the *School Act*, the Ministry of Education and Child Care sets provincial regulations and policies, provides funding, and monitors student success. Local boards of education are responsible for determining their budgetary spending decisions regarding the operation and maintenance of schools within their district. With that in mind, the New Westminster School Board is responsible for making operational decisions about facility matters, such as detailed school designs and how cooling systems are incorporated.

As part of new or replacement school projects, the Ministry provides allowances that can be utilized by school districts to integrate cooling within schools. In addition, to support districts with their repair and maintenance priorities, the Ministry has minor capital funding programs such as the School Enhancement Program (SEP), Carbon Neutral Capital Program (CNCP) and the Annual Facilities Grant (AFG). All of these programs can be utilized by school districts to perform upgrades on HVAC systems at existing schools, such as adding cooling capacity. School districts can request SEP and CNCP funding by identifying priority projects through their annual capital plan submission to the Ministry. AFG is an annual grant and projects are determined at the discretion of the school district as long as they meet Ministry parameters for AFG — under AFG, cooling projects are an eligible expenditure.

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School districts have the autonomy to decide how to best address the needs of students within their local communities. I encourage you to contact the New Westminster Board directly as they are best able to answer any detailed questions you may have about these matters.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C.A. Zacharuk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Christina Zacharuk
Deputy Minister