



JAN 29 2010

Ref: 132173 / 132172

Linda McPhail, Chair
Board of Education
School District No. 38 (Richmond)
7811 Granville Ave
Richmond BC V6Y 3E3

Dear Ms. McPhail:

The Honourable Margaret MacDiarmid, Minister of Education, has asked me to respond to your letters, both dated June 3, 2009, addressed to the Honourable Shirley Bond, seeking approval to market and dispose of the "Old" Steveston Secondary School site, and to subdivide and dispose of a portion of the Mitchell Elementary School site.

It is government's strong belief that the publicly funded school lands acquired by boards of education be retained for public use. The Disposal of Land or Improvement Order was revised in September 2008 to reflect a desire to preserve the capital asset base of the public education system for future school use—particularly in support of emerging Neighbourhood Learning Centres, full day kindergarten and early learning initiatives, and anticipated return of enrolment growth over the coming years. Under this new policy direction, boards of education may no longer permanently dispose of school property for non-educational use, except under exceptional circumstances.

Given government's expectations, the requested sale of the above properties will not be considered for ministerial approval under the Disposal of Land or Improvement Order. The Richmond Board of Education may instead wish to pursue a long-term lease arrangement with a community partner for the Steveston Secondary School site and for the available portion of the Mitchell Elementary School site. In both instances, the long-term leasing of presently surplus property, rather than its permanent disposition, would meet current policy intent to have boards retain ownership of public property.

Please be aware that under the new Order, any lease of ten years or more still requires ministerial approval. As well, the District would be expected to have broadly consulted with its education and community partners regarding the alternative community use for this property in compliance with the School Building Closure and Disposal Policy.

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School District No. 38 (Richmond)

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Ministry of
Education

Office of the
Deputy Minister

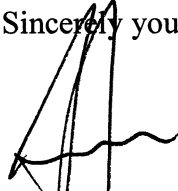
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I hope the above information will assist the Richmond School District in best managing its capital asset inventory over the upcoming years.

Sincerely yours,

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

James Gorman
Deputy Minister

pc: Bruce Beairsto, Superintendent
Ken Morris, Secretary-Treasurer