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July 11, 2014

Honourable Minister Fassbender
Minister of Education

VIA EMAIL: Minister.Educ@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Fassbender:

RE: International Education and September Opening

We are writing regarding the possibility that schools may not open on September 2nd due to the ongoing labour dispute and the implications for our International Education Program. We are concerned that labour instability in the Province of BC in the short-term will have long-term negative repercussions on the success of our efforts internationally. If schools do not open in September, international students may decide to withdraw from our programs and attend school in other provinces or countries. The potential financial loss to our Board and our communities is staggering.

- As a Province, we appear to be taking international students, their tuition fees, and their passion for our public education system “for granted” and not valuing their contribution. International education is a \$2 billion industry that is crucial to the economy of the Province of BC.
- Our international revenues contribute provincially to employment, the housing market, retail sales, private academies, and tourism. International students become new Canadians and attract immigration and new business opportunities to our Province.
- As a school district, international education brings significant additional revenues to our operating budget providing us with the flexibility to meet the needs of students and contributing to student success.
- The International Education Program has in turn helped to build the economies of our local communities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore, and Belcarra as well as the Province of BC.
- The lack of a strike resolution by September 2nd may result in the inability in the K-12 sector to fulfill its commitments to international students.

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- The apparent lack of concern for international education during the current labour dispute contradicts the concept and spirit of Board revenue generation.
- Our Board of Education has embraced the Liberal government's initiatives - as outlined in British Columbia's International Education Strategy document, published in 2012 as part of the BC Jobs Plan - to encourage Boards of Education to generate revenue and become more entrepreneurial.
- In the report by the BC Progress Board, established by the BC Liberal government in July 2001, The Role of International Education: Expanding Student Opportunity and Economic Development in British Columbia, recommendation 4 says that the government must: "Support the international education sector's role in regional economic development."
- According to a recent report of the Council of Ministers of Education (Education ministers signal transformation key to the future, July 9, 2014): "International education continues to be a high priority for ministers. They reaffirmed the importance of Canada's position as a preferred study destination for international students and agreed that they would continue to work with the federal government to strengthen Canada as a brand, which is already being used by institutions across the country as part of their international marketing strategies."
- Entire nations have seen their international programs fail as a result of carelessness and lack of stewardship. It may not be possible to rebuild.

As a Province, we must think globally and act locally. The Board of Education of School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) exhorts both of the parties to reach an expeditious, negotiated agreement or mediated settlement through continuous bargaining throughout the summer in order to preserve the BC Brand and our position at the forefront of the global education industry.

We would be pleased to participate in further discussions with you on this very important matter.

Yours truly,
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 43 (COQUITLAM)



Melissa Hyndes, Chair
Board of Education

c: Board of Education
Thomas J. Grant, Superintendent
Mark Ferrari, Secretary-Treasurer
BCTSA – All Boards of Education
Mayors & Council of: Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore and Belcarra
MLA's: Linda Reimer, Selina Robinson, Mike Farnworth, and Douglas Horne