



550 Poirier Street, Coquitlam, BC Canada V3J 6A7 • Phone: 604-939-9201 • Fax: 604-939-6758

**Learning for a Lifetime**

**BOARD OF  
EDUCATION**

March 8, 2021

**CHAIR:**

Kerri Palmer Isaak

Jennifer Whiteside, Minister  
Ministry of Education  
9045 Stn Prov Govt

**VICE-CHAIR:**

Michael Thomas

Victoria BC V8W 9E2

via email: [educ.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:educ.minister@gov.bc.ca)

**TRUSTEES:**

Jennifer Blatherwick

Dear Minister Whiteside,

**Re: Burke Mountain Middle/Secondary School Funding**

Barb Hobson

On behalf of the School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) Board of Education, I am writing to gain your support in accelerating and securing provincial funding for the Burke Mountain Middle/Secondary school.

Carol Cahoon

Lisa Park

Christine Pollock

As a Board, we recently met with our four MLA's and the priority agenda item was funding for the Burke Mountain Middle/Secondary School. As a follow up to that meeting, and at his request, Board staff met with MLA Fin Donnelly on March 5. We sincerely thank him for his unwavering support and commitment to fulfill the election promise that he and the Premier made, regarding the funding of the school.

Keith Watkins

Craig Woods

We have completed all the necessary documents; originally filing the project definition report (PDR) mid-2019 and subsequently, with the newly introduced concept plan requirement, filed that report in October 2020. We have fulfilled all Ministry and Treasury Board requirements of which we have been made aware.

An aspect of the urgency in securing funding is that a promised school opening date of September 2023 is now unattainable, and a September 2024 date is becoming increasingly challenging. In past projects, the Board has advanced funds for design drawings to shorten the project timeline, however the procurement process is now determined by the Treasury Board, and this unknown means that the advancing of funds exceed our risk threshold. We do not want to see the completion of the school pushed into 2025.

I attach for your reference, a letter that staff recently sent to MLA Donnelly providing a summary of the March 5 meeting. We are very proud of our working relationship with the City of Coquitlam and that they have made the development of this joint site one of their highest priorities – as has the City of Port Coquitlam, which demonstrates the urgency and the priority of providing this critical school and community site.

Should you require any additional details or information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours truly,

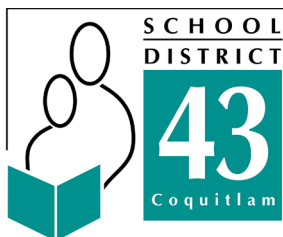
**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 43 (COQUITLAM) BOARD OF EDUCATION**



Kerri Palmer Isaak  
Chair, Board of Education

cc: Fin Donnelly, MLA Coquitlam-Burke Mountain  
Board of Education  
Patricia Gartland, Superintendent of Schools/CEO  
Chris Nicolls, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

Attach: March 8, 2021 Letter to Fin Donnelly, MLA



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Fin Donnelly  
MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain  
via email: [fin.donnelly.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:fin.donnelly.mla@leg.bc.ca)

Dear MLA Donnelly,

**Re: Burke Mountain Middle/Secondary School Funding**

Thank you for taking the time to meet with School District representatives and Coquitlam's Deputy City Manager, Raul Allueva regarding the Burke Mountain Middle/Secondary School and the overdue requirement for Provincial funding support. We appreciated hearing that you are strongly aligned with SD43 and the City of Coquitlam, and that this school is the number one priority on all our agendas.

At this time, all required documents have been submitted to the Ministry, including the Project Definition Report filed mid-2019 and the newly introduced Concept Plan (which now precedes the PDR requirement) filed October 2020. The School District has fulfilled all Ministry requirements to this point in the process, and now awaits the decision regarding funding.

The SD43 Board has indicated that it is willing to advance funds toward the design elements of this new school now, which could reduce the project timeline by up to 6 months. However, with the involvement of Treasury Board in determining the procurement process (i.e. design/build vs design-bid-build), uncertainty is created and potentially sidelines our desire to advance design funds for the project, as the financial risk becomes significant with the design process approach unknown.

The site that will be used to accommodate the middle/secondary school, that will eventually become two separate buildings, is a 22-acre site, jointly owned by School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) and the City of Coquitlam. The District owns 14 acres which will accommodate the middle/secondary school and subsequently, as enrolment increases, a second school will be built as a middle school. The City owns 8 acres and has pledged to build a lit, artificial turf field, track, and park.

The site is challenging due to extreme elevation changes both east to west, and north to south. Both SD43 and the City have demonstrated their commitment to working together to ensure that the site will be designed to work in a complementary manner that maximizes the potential for two schools, play fields, and common assets such as parking and washrooms that are accessible for both community and school uses.

While the city's portion of the work is fully funded, it is the availability of capital funding from the provincial government, which is providing a delay beyond the originally planned September 2023 (and now 2024) targeted opening date to this project. The School District is proposing that the project undertake to use a Design-Bid-Build process which better aligns with the site complexities and continuation of cooperative site design with the City of Coquitlam, while providing efficiency in the overall project coordination.

Given the timelines to design the school, obtain building permits, complete the civil work and extensive retaining wall requirements, and actually construct the school, September 2024 is already a challenging completion date and further delays in funding support put this date in jeopardy.

We look forward to working with you to bring our collective highest priority capital project to realization. The Burke Mountain community, along with other Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam residents, have waited a long time for this school and are anxious to have this promised school and all the related community assets made available to them.

Yours truly,

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 43 (COQUITLAM)**



Chris Nicolls  
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

cc: Board of Education  
Patricia Gartland, Superintendent  
Ivano Cecchini, Executive Director, Facilities and Planning Services  
Raul Allueva, Deputy City Manager, City of Coquitlam