



June 16, 2014

Vancouver Board of Education  
School District #39  
1580 West Broadway  
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Regarding the Draft Revised Policy and Regulations: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities (ACB and ACB R-1) (the “Draft Policy”)**

PACIS represents a group of concerned parents, grandparents, and other citizens of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. The following petition was circulated via email and online commencing May 12, 2014:

*By signing this form, I hereby endorse the formal request to the Vancouver School Board Trustees to delay consideration of the Draft Revised Policy and Regulations: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities (ACB and ACB R-1), until proper consultation with parents, teachers, and medical and mental health care providers has taken place, and the new draft policy has been reviewed and approved by the B.C. College of Family Physicians and the B.C. College of Psychologists, to ensure it reflects the current medical and mental health best practices and standards respecting trans gendered children and adolescents. Any such policy should strive to build and maintain a safe and positive learning environment for all children, regardless of race, religion, mental or physical capacity, appearance, sexual orientation or gender identity, and ensure that all families and their children can feel welcome in school, and be able to participate free from discrimination and harassment on any grounds.*

To date, over 8,000 people have signed the petition in person or online (over 3,600 from Vancouver), thereby endorsing the request for you to delay the vote on the current Draft Policy to allow for meaningful consultation with parents and the BC Colleges of Physicians and Psychologists.

To anyone who attended and/or spoke at the recent VSB Committee III meetings on this issue, it was clear that this was not meaningful consultation and most of the Trustees were not properly considering any input that disagreed with their own pre-determined vote on the Draft policy. As Trustees, you are called to represent and protect the interests of ALL children and families in the district, and not one single special interest group at the expense of all others. With proper and meaningful consultation, it is possible to have a new policy that can protect LGBTQ+ students, particularly transgendered students, while addressing the concerns of other non-LGBTQ+ students and their families. The current Draft Policy fails to balance these interests.

If you vote for this Draft Policy at tonight’s meeting, without addressing the real concerns of parents, you put the Vancouver School Board at risk of future litigation it can ill afford. Your assertion that this is about Human Rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is based upon a very skewed view and understanding of those documents and your actions will be open to challenge. This is one of the issues of concern that needs to be addressed.

I again urge you to delay this vote and engage in meaningful consultation and dialogue on the real issues hidden within this Draft Policy that you have not addressed. Everyone is for safety and protection of vulnerable students, so let’s work together to find the best way to ensure ALL children are safe in schools.

Yours truly,

PACIS

Per: By Email

Cheryl M. Chang