

Hon. Rich Coleman
Minister of Housing and Social Development
Government of British Columbia

September 14, 2009

Sir:

We empathize with your position, having to make necessary cuts to worthwhile programs, in order to provide funding to other initiatives. As the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to Earl Marriott Secondary-the largest secondary school in Surrey-we, too, have to decide which programs will receive funding at the expense of others.

Last year the PAC gratefully received approximately \$33,800 in funding from the Gaming Commission. Although the requests for funding from our school programs and clubs came to over \$85,000 our volunteer budget committee worked hard to distribute funds equitably.

As with the decisions you and your Ministry make, not everyone is happy with the decisions our PAC makes.

Compounding the difficulty of deciding how to distribute the funds is the fact that Earl Marriott's revenue stream has been decreased by \$40,000 due to the Healthy Schools initiative limiting the type of foods and beverages which can be sold in the school's vending machines.

Many of our students now meet the Healthy Living and Sports Ministry mandate of receiving 30 minutes of exercise per day by walking to the local convenience stores for their snacks. Once students leave the campus, the administration can no longer monitor their behaviour and ensure their safety. Moreover, large numbers of high school students converging on two locations daily creates unwanted noise, nuisance and litter for the community.

Young, inexperienced drivers in a hurry are not in anyone's best interest. Students with cars increase their carbon footprint by racing off to purchase lunches at fast food outlets as the Healthy Living lunches provided by the cafeteria are not to their taste. This year, students will have less time to get their lunches as their lunch time has been reduced to accommodate an extended Spring Break-a move necessary for the District to save money due to budgetary shortfalls caused by decreased Government support.

Mr. Coleman, a hard look needs to be taken at the impact of this Government's decision making policy and the true impacts these decisions have. From you and your Ministry through to our volunteer PAC, we all work hard to provide the best support for our 'constituents'. Our hope is that with this letter you gain deeper insight into the impact faced by the cuts made. Thank you for your time.

Yours truly,

Jan Golden
Earl Marriott PAC Chair

Karolyn Donnelly
Earl Marriott PAC Treasurer

Cc: Gordon Hogg, MLA
Surrey-White Rock