



Abbotsford District Parent Advisory Council  
2790 Tims Street  
Abbotsford, BC V2T 4M7  
(604) 855-8197

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September 23, 2009

**Hon. Rich Coleman**  
Room 128  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

**Hon. Margaret MacDiarmid**  
Room 347  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

**RE: Funding cuts to PACs/DPACs**

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of the District Parent Advisory and PACs in the Abbotsford school district, we would like to express our deep concern over the Direct Access Grant funding cuts.

A calculation of the Direct Access funds lost to PAC's in School District #34 this September is in excess of **\$280,000**. Eighteen of our schools also have a Bingo affiliation, and will not receive the \$10 per student that our other schools will.

Despite the fact that our government seems to think that our students can make up the activities by walking to school, dancing and playing in our parks, this is not the reality. We have worked very hard as a community to ensure that our students are *positively engaged in their schools where they are safe* and have opportunities to experience and try activities that in many cases, would never happen outside of the school. ***Research supports the link between a student being engaged in his school and his academic success. For many students, these activities keep them in school.***

Many of our students do not have the means to play sports, participate in fine arts activities outside of school or be involved in a club. These funds cover a huge variety of opportunities for our students such as, but not limited to;

- Graduation activities
- Sports teams (including travel, equipment and uniforms)
- Computer labs (including hardware and software)
- School newspapers, yearbook, chess clubs
- Robotics, library resources
- Musical theatre, drama and art classes
- Band, choir and other performance groups

Bussing is a major area where PAC's support opportunities for students both during school and outside the timetable. Our school budgets are already stretched to the limit; without the assistance of these funds we cannot

continue to offer the same quality of care for the well-rounded student that - as a community and as a province- we have worked so hard to achieve.

Another concern we have is in the area of communication. The 18 schools we have, who received no Direct Access funding, have no idea if they will be receiving their Bingo funds in the spring. Will they get the funds in April as promised? Will that grant be at \$10 or \$20 per student? Will they lose their Bingo affiliation altogether? There is approximately \$200,000 in Bingo money that would normally be coming to these 18 schools in the spring that also goes directly into supporting programs for students. We cannot budget and plan without this information. We cannot make the best choices for our students with the little money we have until we know where we stand. ***The lack of consultation and notice around these funding cuts has left our PAC's discouraged and apprehensive.***

We strongly urge the government to reconsider Direct Access grants given to PACs/DPACs and ***reinstate the funding to \$20 per student.*** We ask that you give the schools with a Bingo affiliation their Direct Access grants back.

***These are our students and they are our future.*** Thank you for your consideration.

*Rhonda Pauls*

Rhonda Pauls, Chairperson  
Abbotsford DPAC

cc: Hon. Gordon Campbell  
Hon. Ida Chong  
Hon. Randy Hawes  
Hon. Michael De Jong  
Hon. John Van Dongen  
Julie MacRae (Superintendent of Schools in SD #34)  
Cindy Schafer (Chairwoman, Board of Education in SD #34)  
BCCPAC board

RP/cr