



DEC 22 2006

Our Ref: 116399

Penny Tees, President
British Columbia School Trustees Association
4th Floor, 1580 Broadway W
Vancouver BC V6J 5K9

Dear Ms. Tees:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Penny'.

Thank you for your letter dated November 20, 2006, regarding school fees. I was pleased to meet with trustees earlier this month at the BCSTA's Academy and appreciated the opportunity to address their questions and hear their views relating to school fees.

In your correspondence you note that the Board of Directors for the BCSTA passed a motion on October 20, 2006, requesting that Government quickly proceed with "measures that will have the effect of protecting education programs," thereby allowing school boards the "flexibility to provide a wide selection of course offerings responsive to the needs of their local communities." The motion arises from the BCSTA's concern that the recent British Columbia Supreme Court decision respecting school fees not erode the variety of educational opportunities or the current "quality of programming."

While many districts are reporting that they are not affected by the ruling, and others are expanding choice programs, I recognize that some districts have concerns. We are continuing to meet with partner groups to discuss options and opportunities to grow specialty programs in districts throughout B.C. Ministry of Education staff are considering all options for doing this including the possibility of amending existing legislation. In the meantime, I know school boards will make the best decisions possible based on the needs of the students they serve.

Thank you for sharing your concerns with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Shirley Bond'.

Shirley Bond
Minister
Deputy Premier