

Presentation by PAN founding member Maggie Milne Martens
on June 7, 2016 at the VSB Committee of the Whole



I am speaking on behalf of the Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education.

Here we are again and I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you tonight about the revised budget, but - like you - I am weary and frustrated that we are once more participating in this fraught and distressing process in which parents, teachers and school boards alike are forced to vie for essential educational services for children - just because the provincial government has decided to throw a few crumbs from the table - and they are crumbs.

This whole process is symptomatic of an education system in deep crisis.

We are not here to debate amendments.

We are here to urge you once again to reject this budget.

The restoration of 2.25 million dollars, while certainly welcome, does nothing to address the root cause of the budget shortfall - which is a flawed and inadequate provincial funding system - one that is totally insufficient to meet the educational needs of all children.

Nor does this mitigate the impacts of the staggering \$21.8 million in cuts that remain, all of which will have significant, detrimental and long lasting repercussions for ALL children across this entire district. The relentless austerity measures imposed by the government have gone too far and threatens the whole democratic purpose of our public education system.

Meager concessions by the provincial government change nothing.

BC ed is still in the red.

The parent advocacy network therefore urges you, the board of trustees to stand firm - and united - in your resolve to reject this budget - as an act of protest against the continued underfunding and dismantling of our public education system.

Parents, teachers, concerned citizens of this city and school boards across the province are looking to you - to once again lead by example and have the courage to take a stand for all children, for public education and for our future society.

Please say NO.