

Secretary Treasurer's Office
Vancouver Board of Education
1580 West Broadway,
Vancouver, B.C., V6J 5K8

April 6, 2009

Attention: Administrative Coordinator

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees;

The Parent Advisory Council of General Gordon Elementary is extremely concerned about the proposed elimination of the Vice Principal position from the school and the impact this move will have on the safety and academic performance of our children.

General Gordon is highly diverse community of learners with unique demographics that demand not only a talented administrative team to build a cohesive staff but also a great deal of time for individual student and family intervention. General Gordon's population represents diverse economic backgrounds and includes: 15% with special designations; 8% ESL; district late French Immersion and French MAC programs; and 66% of the school are intermediate students with 41% of the total population in grades 6 and 7. In addition to these challenges, General Gordon is undergoing seismic upgrading, placing additional demands on the Principal and Vice Principal over the next several years.

Currently, 30 students with designations receive individual intervention and family support. In addition, 15 children designated as gifted have no in school support and rely on the Principal and Vice Principal to manage their cases and find appropriate district programs for their needs. The late French Immersion and French MAC programs add additional administrative demands in promotion of the programs, managing the intake of new students, and supporting the transition of students from outside General Gordon into the school community.

The uniquely high proportion of intermediate to primary students creates, perhaps, the greatest challenges at Gordon. The abundance of older students adds safety issues for all students. Behaviour management and social responsibility are key issues with this age group. In addition to the support and articulation process for the secondary transition of such a large number of grade seven students, the challenges of personal health, safety and career education are magnified and must be managed through the school administrators.

General Gordon's participation as a Neighbourhoods of Learning pilot will place further demands on the school-based administration now and for the next several years as they manage the school aspects of the pilot project, seismic construction and community user integration.

In summary, the parents at Gordon Elementary strongly believe that a Vice Principal and Principal are both needed to maintain a safe, healthy and effective learning community in light of Gordon's diverse student body, large intermediate population, and seismic upgrade project.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Sulston
PAC Chair