

Monday, June 18, 2018

Education Minister Rob Flemming,

In regards to:

École Océane

1951 Estevan Rd,
Nanaimo, BC
V9S 3Y9

I am a tax paying BC resident. I am a parent. I send my child to school everyday in our province to a school that has not been held to provincial safety standards. My son, along with 141 other students and 20 staff, spend 6+ hours a day, 5 days a week in a building that has tested positive for asbestos, has tested positive for lead in the water, has a rodent problem and is undersized for the student capacity limits. The fire exits are compromised due to lack of space for storage of essential equipment. The gym is over fire regulation capacity if the school wants to gather, as the gym is not a regular size gym for a k-7 elementary school.

This year, population has increased and the school will have a 7th teacher led classroom added. The BC Ministry of Education capital planning standards state that: *"the area of a new classroom including ancillary space shall not be less than 75m square."* This room is only 50 m square; well below the provincial set recommendations.

This room was also the ONLY room left in our school and has been operating as the sensory needs room for 10 students with medical designations.

This is not an adequate classroom space for a teacher led classroom and it is taking away the only space allocated to those that require a quiet learning space outside of the regular classroom.

There is a huge focus on mental health in our province. We have gone strides to develop learning plans and to train support staff to work with kids with medical designations to help them adapt, grow and function. Not only are we taking this space away from them but we are putting other kids in an inadequate learning space. This is unacceptable to continue and is not at all in line with supporting a decrease in mental health issues in our youth.

The school board (Conseil Scolaire Francophone) District 93 is a public school board. The children attending these schools have the right to a safe place to learn and grow regardless of the language they choose to learn in.

The superintendent of our board has been to our school and has presented us with the reasoning to why we are facing these issues; the Provincial Government will not acknowledge that money needs to be allocated to keep our Francophone kids in a safe school environment.

It is not a valid or acceptable reason to say other schools are in the same situation in the province so we should understand. No school should be operating in a building with these conditions. It is not acceptable to say that they can change schools to attend an English board school in their area. French is an official language of this country. It is progressively becoming a mandatory requirement to work and

hold leadership roles in Canada's largest employer the Canadian Federal Government. The Francophone education and school standards should be equal to what is awarded to the English school boards.

The elected government has a responsibility to the children of this province. These same children that we are educating to one day work in our workforce and support our economy, are the children that you are subjecting to learn in schools with potential exposure to poisons, potential seismic violations, and various other health and safety issues... why is this happening in 2018?

Give the school board adequate money to keep these students and staff safe.

It is their provincial right. It is their Canadian right. It is their human right.

Carolyn Millaire