

April 29, 2014

Ms. Patti Bacchus
Chairperson, Vancouver Board of Education

Dear Ms. Bacchus and Trustees:

I am a Pediatric Endocrinologist at BC Children's Hospital and a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at UBC. I am also a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), the Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health (CPATH), and the Endocrine Society.

Our team at BCCH, working in conjunction with mental-health and other professionals from the BC Transgender Clinical Care Group, has been providing medical and mental-health care for gender-non-conforming and transgender children, youth and young adults since 1993. We have seen about 150 patients during that time and have recently published the results of a retrospective review of our first 13 years of providing care in the *Journal of Pediatrics* [2014;164(4):906–911].

I therefore feel qualified to comment on the VSB's proposed *Draft Revised Policy and Regulations: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities*, which will be open for discussion at your upcoming Education and Student Services Standing Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 14 at 5:00 PM.

I have studied your proposed policy carefully and am quite impressed with its logical, compassionate, balanced approach to providing support to this unique, high-risk population. As a medical professional, I feel that it reflects the spirit of the current WPATH *Standards of Care Version 7* for the management of trans youth. It is also in line with federal guidelines from the Public Health Agency of Canada and pending changes in BC legislation regarding gender designation, expression and markers.

Our published research from BC mirrors that of other countries, where a 10–20% risk for attempted suicide has been documented in this vulnerable group of students, which is directly related to lack of parental and social support. Policies such as the one the VSB has proposed are still needed across the country to mitigate any school-related stress that these kids feel and to enable them to access mental-health and medical care in a timely fashion through such excellent resources as the VSB's Anti-Homophobia and Diversity Mentor position. Much of the rest of Canada looks to Vancouver for its model of transgender care, and it's very important that this policy be approved.

I am therefore grateful to have been offered a chance to voice my professional opinion at this meeting, and I look forward to addressing you then. Thanks very much for your attention and thoughtful consideration of this policy.

Sincerely,

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