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Sent by email: jveale@psych.ubc.ca

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Committee III - Education & Student Services, Vancouver School Board
c/o Maisie Louie
Vancouver Board of Education
School District #39
1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 5K8

Regarding the Draft Revised Policy and Regulations: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities (ACB and ACB R-1)

Dear Committee members,

This letter is in support of the proposed policy and regulation revisions for sexual orientation and gender identities. I am writing as a scholar working at the University of British Columbia in the School of Nursing. I am presently conducting research on the health and wellbeing of trans youth and I have authored a number of publications in leading peer-reviewed academic journals regarding transgender people's psychology and identity development. I have also undertaken clinical psychologist training in New Zealand in which I worked with trans and gender-diverse youth and I am a member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). It is clear to me that the proposed make an important step in protecting the rights and promoting the wellbeing of trans and gender-diverse students in Vancouver schools.

While there have been concerns that the proposed changes do not give enough consideration to the role of medical and healthcare professionals, it is clear to me the changes address the role and obligations of schools in trans and gender-diverse people's lives, which are independent of the role and obligations of medical and healthcare professionals. While medical and healthcare professionals may play a significant role in transgender children and adolescent's lives, this is not always the case. It is becoming increasingly recognised that psychiatric categories do not adequately encapsulate trans identities and gender diversity. This is being reflected in, for example, WPATH's 2010 statement of depathologization¹, and the World Health Organization's proposal to move these diagnoses out of the Mental and Behavioural Disorders chapter into a non-psychiatric chapter, called "Certain conditions related to sexual health" in the upcoming 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases². While Vancouver School Board's proposed policy revisions do not preclude (and even encourage where appropriate) the involvement of healthcare professionals in the lives of trans and gender-diverse school

¹ http://www.wpath.org/uploaded_files/140/files/de-psychopathologisation%205-26-10%20on%20letterhead.pdf

² Drescher, J., Cohen-Kettenis, P., & Winter, S. (2012). Minding the body: Situating gender identity diagnoses in the ICD-11. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 24, 568-577.

students, they also acknowledge the rights of these students to privacy and confidentiality where appropriate.

I believe that the proposed policy and regulation revisions for sexual orientation and gender identities are appropriate to the role of schools in the care of trans and gender-diverse children and youth.

Yours sincerely,

Jaimie Veale