



**British Columbia  
School Trustees Association**

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January 19, 2007

***The Honourable Shirley Bond***  
*Minister of Education*  
PO Box 9052 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Bond,

Re: School Board Fees

As you are aware, school boards, students and parents have been extremely concerned about the wide-ranging implications of the Supreme Court of B.C. decision in *Young v. Minister of Education*. As school boards carefully examined the ruling with their legal counsel, educational staff, and school communities, the effect of the ruling became less clear and the scope of programs affected widened.

I wrote to you last November to request that you consider measures to address the need of school boards to provide a wide selection of courses and activities to address the needs of individual communities. I thank you for your response indicating that your staff was considering all options including the option of amending existing legislation.

BCSTA's Board of Directors met on January 15, 2007 to discuss potential legislative changes. The purpose of this letter is to more specifically identify those changes that the Board of Directors believes are essential.

In consequence, BCSTA respectfully recommends that legislative change (to the School Board Fees Order, School Regulation, or School Act) be made that will:

1. Clarify that locally developed hardship policies are applicable to all curricular activities within educational programs provided by school boards.
2. Restore the legislative provisions that would permit school boards to require students to bring their own musical instrument for their own individual use in an educational program, or to charge fees for rental of instruments.
3. Confirm the exceptions for school supplies and equipment for individual use in an educational program and appropriate personal clothing and safety equipment.



4. Confirm that these exemptions also apply to tools, materials and equipment required to participate in trades programs. We note, however, that BCSTA's preferred position is that these items be fully funded by the Ministry of Education through an addition to the block funding grant, as per AGM 2006 Resolution #19.
5. Permit school boards to collect fees to recover costs of curricular field trips.
6. Permit school boards to recover special costs of providing Board Authority Authorized Courses and integrated programs of choice.
7. Permit school boards to recover special costs associated with providing a course as long as students have other courses within the same subject area that would not require fees.

It is important to note that these requested changes are not predicated on an assumption that the pre-judgment status quo must be restored. Indeed, if these changes were implemented that would not be the case. Rather, the underlying rationale for the changes is to strike a reasonable and acceptable balance between respecting that basic public education must be free to all students and preserving a reasonable and limited capacity to continue to offer educational opportunities of enhanced quality expected and indeed in many cases demanded, by parents and the public.

In this letter, I have not tried to map out the required changes to each element of the legislative framework. BCSTA staff would be pleased to work with your staff or Attorney General staff on technical aspects.

I would be pleased to expand on the rationale for any of these requested changes, or your staff may contact BCSTA General Counsel Judith Clark to further discuss the background to these requests.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Penny Tees". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Penny Tees  
President