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Vision Vancouver for Nomination - Board of Education
Introduction

When my children started kindergarten, one of the first things I learned about public schools is that they need money.

Over the next few years I did my part by emptying ashtrays and counting bills in casinos in the middle of the night – *that was in the 90s for those of you who might not remember*.

I organized bake sales and flea markets and silent auctions and car washes. In the name of schools I sold things to my friends and neighbours - things like raffle tickets, wrapping paper, grocery vouchers, bedding plants, greeting cards, gift baskets, mugs, magazines, coupon books, pizzas, hot dogs, fruit pies, poinsettias, manure, and frozen chicken.

I did this, I believed to help our public schools provide the education we need to the children we love. I got so good at selling and organizing - I even coached other parents on how to do it.

And then one day, a parent told us that his daughter, his lovely daughter with Down Syndrome and in grade 4, was having her school support time cut in half.... support time that was critical to her school success and, perhaps more importantly, critical to her ability to participate with her friends in the classroom.

Another parent, who meant well, looked at me, and suggested the obvious - perhaps we should fundraise for a full time support worker.

At that moment I realized that public schools had become a charity project and I had become one of the local fundraisers. People were accepting that underfunding

Needless to say that day marked the end of my side career in fundraising and the beginning of my advocacy work for public schools.

Since then, I have worked with inspiring, like-minded people through Vancouver's Save Our Schools movement, the BC Society for Public Education and, before the NPA got a majority, I co-chaired the Advocacy Committee of the Vancouver School Board.

I **know** that community advocates in Vancouver and throughout the Province held off even worse cuts to our schools.

Whether the need is safe schools, teachers, books, music or librarians we should never accept that your charity or my charity through fees or **shopping** should prop up our public school system.

If elected to Vision Vancouver's Board of Education team - I will champion the cause - schools need to support all children and they need the **public** resources to do it.

Thank you.

Close

Well, I am going to begin where I ended....

If you remember my story about my daughter's school friend?

Her story and ones like it play out all the time in Vancouver schools. Indeed in schools around the province.

With too few resources principals and teachers face tough decisions every day about whose need is most pressing.

I have a different Vision of Schools. I would like them to be a place of abundance rather than scarcity. I would like an environment where we demonstrate how important our children are by providing what they need, when they need it. Where teachers are valued and where parents talk about how great the school is rather than the next fundraiser.

And, I envision these schools to be located everywhere in Vancouver, for all children.

Thank you for coming out tonight to listen to all of us. And I hope you will support my nomination.