



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

September 1, 2017

**The Honourable Claire Trevena**  
*Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure*  
PO Box 9055  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E2, Canada

Dear Minister Trevena,

**RE: Consultation Before BC Ferries Schedule Changes**

During the BC School Trustees Association's spring 2017 Annual General Meeting, our member Boards of Education passed a significant resolution calling for consultation before BC Ferries schedule changes.

The motions passed by our membership follows:

*That BCSTA urge the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to consult with local school districts and the Ministry of Education before implementing any BC Ferries schedule changes to determine if there is any significant impact on students.*

When ferry schedules were changed in the past, often with several sailings being terminated, it was done without consultation with local school districts. The effects of these decisions were widespread, with fieldtrips, travel between schools for social and cultural opportunities, extra-curricular activities and the ability for specialist teachers and guest speakers to visit schools on the islands all being negatively impacted by these changes.

Furthermore, families wanting to take part in activities now need to leave earlier and stay later, and there is now no assurance that students will be able to board ferries due to limited space. This has also impacted bottom lines, with school districts having to pay more for staff time and travel.

Premier John Horgan's mandate letter to you emphasised the government's commitment to ensuring "that children get access to the quality public education they need to succeed..." With respect to the issues outlined above, and in the spirit of that commitment to students, I invite you to work together with potentially impacted local school districts, along with the Ministry of Education, prior to making future changes to the BC Ferries schedule so that we may minimize negative impacts on students.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to hearing from you regarding any possibilities or proposals that you may have surrounding this important concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G B Swan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**Gordon Swan**

*President*

BC School Trustees Association

Enclosure

cc: BCSTA Member Boards of Education

## **15. CONSULTATION BEFORE BC FERRIES SCHEDULE CHANGES**

**SUBMITTED BY:** SD 71 (Comox Valley)

### **BE IT RESOLVED:**

That BCSTA urge the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to consult with local school districts and the Ministry of Education before implementing any BC Ferries schedule changes to determine if there is any significant impact on students.

### **RATIONALE:**

The ferry schedule was changed and several sailings were eliminated without any consultation process with school districts.

This has meant:

- a) reduced opportunities for students to take part in field trips.
- b) the inability of students to travel between schools to maximize cultural and social opportunities. For example, in School District 71, there was a time when students from Denman Island and Hornby Island could go back and forth between the 2 islands but this is no longer as accessible as it once was.
- c) as a result of the current ferry schedule, senior secondary students are limited in the extra-curricular activities they can access.
- d) there is a reduced ability for specialist teachers and guest speakers to visit the islands.
- e) when planning field trips, there is no assurance that students will be able to board the ferry. For example, schools and parents may spend money for bus transportation and bookings at venues but students may not be able to make it on the ferry as ferry sailings are crowded now that sailings are less frequent. The field trips schools organize that involve ferry travel (e.g. trips to the recreation centres and museums) usually have to start before the start of the school day (e.g. 7:40 am ferry) and end after the school day ends (e.g. 4:30 pm) so there are increased costs to parents and staff. In addition, students are often tired after a long day.
- f) families wanting to take part in activities that are part of their child's learning plans have to leave earlier and stay later if ferry travel is involved.
- g) increased costs to the school district for staff time/travel.
- h) morning ferry traffic is unpredictable as there are large trucks, construction materials etc. on the ferries and this makes it difficult for staff to ensure that they will arrive on time if they travel to work via ferry.