

**Media Release**

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For Immediate Release

**New Westminster parent MaryAnn Mortensen announces she will run for School Trustee**

New Westminster, BC -- Former New Westminster District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) Chair, MaryAnn Mortensen has announced that she will be running for School Trustee in this November's civic election.

Mortensen is the mother of two New Westminster school children, ages 8 and 4, attending Lord Tweedsmuir and Connaught Heights Elementary schools and is one of the founding organizers of the highly successful West End Summerfest festival in Grimston Park.

Mortensen says completion of the school district's long-standing Capital Plan is the most important issue needing to be dealt with by the new Westminster Board of Education, along with the need for an effective communication plan and "child-centered" decision-making.

"Every facet of decision-making needs to be child-centred, and better opportunities need to be created for parents to engage in their children's education," Mortensen said. "There also needs to be greater transparency and accountability in how the New Westminster school board operates."

Mortensen first became directly involved in school district issues in 2008 when the School Board of the day announced plans to build an elementary or middle school on Grimston Park shortly before the 2008 civic election. She worked diligently with others in the community to bring concerns forward to the Board of Education regarding the lack of due process that had taken place in determining where these new west side schools should be located.

Mortensen subsequently participated in the board's workshop process in January and February 2009 which successfully, and more openly, identified potential new west side elementary and middle school sites.

"I think it was very important for me, as a parent and a community voice, to participate as fully as possible in the process and in the decision making that determined the placement of the new schools," Mortensen said.

In 2009, Mortensen was appointed DPAC Secretary and then served as DPAC Vice Chair in 2010-11 and most recently as DPAC Chair this year.

In April of 2011, Mortensen attended the AGM of the British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Council's (BCCPAC) and brought forward a New Westminster resolution calling for the Ministry of Education to work with Health Canada to establish research-based guidelines for the length of the eating portion of the school lunch period, adequate time for preparation and hand-washing, and ample time for outdoor play. The resolution, called the "Lunch Period Routine", was adopted by BCCPAC and passed by a significant margin.

Mortensen has also served as a director-at-large with the Montessori Society and on the Richard McBride and Lord Tweedsmuir PACs, and previously worked in business and payroll administration in both corporate and community centres in Vancouver.