

**VOICE NEW WESTMINSTER**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LADYMAN REPORT POINTS TO “ORGANIZATIONALLY CHAOTIC” SCHOOL DISTRICT CULTURE: VOICE**

New Westminster, B.C. – Consultant Stewart Ladyman finally made his report and recommendations surrounding a serious April 26, 2005 asbestos dust incident at New Westminster Senior Secondary public at a Public Information Meeting held on Tuesday night, April 17, 2007.

Ladyman makes twenty-two recommendations to the New Westminster Board of School Trustees with the hope that his recommendations will not only prevent another workplace incident but that they will also contribute “to the development of a Culture of Health and Safety for employees, students and the community-at-large” in the New Westminster School District. He considers his recommendations as a guide for the school district showing how they can go about creating this culture.

Stewart Ladyman is a well-respected education administrator—now retired—with extensive experience as a Superintendent of Schools and as a Field Liaison Superintendent with the Ministry of Education. He was hired by the New Westminster School District to conduct an independent inquiry into the April 26, 2005 asbestos incident and to review the district’s “workplace practices.”

Ladyman’s inquiry comes in the wake of a damning report last January by WorkSafeBC which concluded that the New Westminster School District showed “reckless disregard” in relation to the asbestos dust incident.

In Early January of this year, *Voice New Westminster* was notified of the existence WorksafeBC’s Appeal Decision report into the April 26, 2005 asbestos release incident and took a leading role in getting this information out the New Westminster public.

“We’re very pleased that we have played a role in forcing some positive changes in this school district,” said Ron Unger, a *Voice* director and the parent of two young children attending Herbert Spencer Elementary. “We believe the children and staff are safer now because of the actions *Voice* took in releasing information the district was trying to bury and make go away.”

Patrick O’Connor, also a director of *Voice New Westminster*, and the parent of a child now attending New Westminster Senior Secondary, says it will take a bit of time for *Voice* and the community to digest Ladyman’s report. However, he says it is already clear that Ladyman’s twenty-two recommendations point to long term failings of the school district on a number of fronts, notably failures relating to communication and the failure to establish a strong health and safety culture.

“For me, Ladyman’s report underscores the organisationally chaotic nature of the New Westminster school district,” said O’Connor. “But I’m satisfied that Ladyman is headed in the right direction with his recommendations—especially his comments about communications in the district—but there are still many unanswered questions about the incident, particularly the question of who is going to be held accountable.”

In an effort to help the New Westminster community digest and understand Ladyman's report and his recommendations, *Voice New Westminster* has prepared a Guide to the Ladyman Report that distils the key information from Ladyman's report and offers some initial analysis. A copy of this guide has been attached to this news release.

*Voice New Westminster* is a recently-formed New Westminster civic electors group comprised of residents from all parts of the city sharing a common vision for a reinvigorated and sustainable New Westminster.

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Attachments & Online References

- Voice New Westminster's Guide to the Ladyman Report
- [www.voicenewwestminster.org](http://www.voicenewwestminster.org)

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