

**VOICE NEW WESTMINSTER**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 16, 2007

## **VOICE NEW WESTMINSTER “CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL” ABOUT LADYMAN REPORT**

New Westminster, B.C. – In anticipation of the release of consultant Stewart Ladyman’s report into the April 26, 2005 asbestos dust release incident at New Westminster Senior Secondary, *Voice New Westminster* is cautiously hopeful that Mr. Ladyman’s report and his recommendations will push the New Westminster Board to provide a safer working and learning environment for students, staff and parents.

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. Ladyman now works as a private consultant and was hired by the New Westminster School District to conduct an 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.

Ladyman is set to make his recommendations public at a Public Information Meeting Tuesday night, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in the NWSS Library.

Patrick O’Connor, a director of *Voice New Westminster*, and the parent of a child now attending New Westminster Senior Secondary, says some aspects of Ladyman’s report are already known to the public.

“Anecdotally, we’ve already been told that Mr. Ladyman went further in his investigation and in his recommendations than the narrow terms of reference he was originally given by the New Westminster School Trustees,” said O’Connor. “Mr. Ladyman spoke very forthrightly with a number of people in this community and shared his initial thoughts and observations, so we’re cautiously hopeful that he is headed in the right direction—we’ll know for sure on Tuesday night when he makes his recommendations public.”

It is also already known that Ladyman’s report makes twenty-two recommendations to the school district, many of which are believed to point to the long term failings of an organizationally chaotic New Westminster School District with an almost non-existent health and safety culture.

However, there is some good news coming out of the asbestos incident with respect to health and safety issues and in recent weeks there have been signs that a few things are changing in the New Westminster School district as a result of WorksafeBC’s report and Ladyman’s investigation.

“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 that the district was trying to bury and make go away.”

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

*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.

- 30 -

Attachments & Online References

- [www.voicenewwestminster.org](http://www.voicenewwestminster.org)

For more information, please contact Blair Armitage 604-526-7794;  
[blair.armitage@gmail.com](mailto:blair.armitage@gmail.com)