

Voice New Westminster

October 25, 2011

For Immediate Release

Voice New Westminster school trustee candidates seek NWTU and CUPE 409's advice on all-candidates meeting

New Westminster, BC -- Yesterday afternoon, Voice New Westminster's school trustee candidates communicated by email with the New Westminster Teachers' Union (NWTU) and CUPE 409 regarding an all-candidates meeting planned by the two unions.

In their email, the Voice New Westminster school trustee candidates noted that the BCTF, NWTU and CUPE 409 are currently engaged in contract negotiations that involve the New Westminster school district. The Voice candidates also indicated that the scope of the questions that sitting Trustees can engage in must therefore be limited.

For sitting Trustees, the Voice candidates stated, contract negotiations, and matters that relate to these negotiations, are an in camera matter and it is therefore inappropriate for sitting Trustees to be taking public positions that could undermine, impair or devalue the current negotiation process.

All of Voice New Westminster's school trustee candidates value and respect the work that teachers and support staff perform in the New Westminster school district and their dedication to students. The Voice candidates also recognize the valuable relationship the New Westminster Board of Education has with the NWTU and CUPE 409.

However, given the current contract negotiation context, the Voice school trustee candidates have respectfully put forward the position that candidates participating in all-candidates meetings, or responding to questionnaires, should only be asked to respond to questions that are suitable for all candidates to answer.

The Voice school trustee candidates wish to make it clear that they are, and always have been, willing to attend the NWTU/CUPE 409 all-candidates meeting. But given the current context of contract negotiations, the Voice candidates felt it was important to make it clear that the ground rules for all-candidates meetings are different this year than in previous years.

Given the position taken by the Voice school trustee candidates, the Voice candidates have asked the NWTU and CUPE 409 to advise as whether they still see value in the Voice candidates participating in the all-candidates meeting event under these ground rules.

Voice New Westminster school trustee candidates have previously participated fully in all-candidates meetings sponsored by the NWTU and CUPE 409 and will continue to do so, including this year, provided there is a clear understanding that participating candidates should only be asked to respond to questions that are suitable for all candidates to answer.

The full text of the email sent to the NWTU and CUPE 409 by the Voice New Westminster school trustee candidates is appended to the bottom of this media release.

- 30 -

For further information please contact:

Casey Cook at 604-522-7338 casey@caseycook.ca

Jim Goring at 604-376-0835 jim.goring@shaw.ca

www.voicenewwestminster.org

From: info@voicenewwestminster.org [mailto:info@voicenewwestminster.org]

Sent: October-24-11 1:34 PM

Subject: To: New Westminster Teachers' Union (NWTU) and CUPE 409 re: All-Candidates Meeting

To: New Westminster Teachers' Union (NWTU) and CUPE 409

All of Voice New Westminister's school trustee candidates value and respect the work that teachers and support staff perform in the New Westminister school district and their dedication to the students.

Voice New Westminister and all of its candidates recognize and value the process of collective bargaining. However, it is clear that, for sitting Trustees, contract negotiations and matters that relate to these negotiations are an in camera matter and it is therefore inappropriate for sitting Trustees to be taking public positions.

Given the fact that the BCTF, NWTU and CUPE 409 are currently engaged in contract negotiations that involve the New Westminister school district, the scope of the questions that sitting Trustees can engage in must be limited. It is our position, therefore, that candidates should be asked to respond only to questions that are suitable for all candidates to answer.

Again, Voice New Westminister candidates recognize the valuable relationship that the New Westminister Board of Education has with the NWTU and CUPE 409 and we respectfully put this position forward to you.

We hope that you will respect both our position and the negotiations process.

In light of the above points please advise if you still see value in our participation in this event.

From: The Voice New Westminister school trustee candidates: Casey Cook, Jim Goring, Lisa Graham, MaryAnn Mortensen and Brenda McEachern-Keen