



Statement from the Board of Education

September 10, 2010

Thank you for being here. There are two reasons why we've invited you here today - to release an important report from the Auditor General; and to outline the Board's response to its recommendations.

The Board, after the summer break, has now had an opportunity to review and discuss the document in detail. We are releasing the full report. Nothing has been changed. Nothing has been omitted. Nothing has been deleted.

The report outlines challenges in governance that affect the Board's decision-making, as well as shortcomings in internal financial controls. It makes nine important recommendations to address these issues. The Board is committed to working with our senior management team to address all of the recommendations.

We are grateful to the Office of the Auditor-General for accepting our invitation to undertake this review. The broad experience and independent perspective they brought to the task is both apparent in the report and useful to the Board. We believe the report and its recommendations will help the Board and school district staff to move forward in a constructive manner.

The first part of the report deals with governance. It's a challenge. Democracy can be messy, especially at this level. Each trustee was elected on his or her own platform, and to represent voters on that basis. There is no doubt that the members of the current board hold a variety of opinions. Democracy works best when there is respect for differing points of view - when we take the time to fully discuss issues, build understanding and create consensus. That's what we are trying to do. Whatever our differences, we are united in wanting to provide the best possible education for Langley students. The Auditor General's recommendations will help us achieve that goal.

The second section of the report deals with the issue of internal financial controls. It would be easy to blame staff as some members of the community have done. But again, that's not how democracy works. This Board and the previous Board are ultimately responsible for the management of the finances of the Langley School District. We accept that responsibility.

We are working with our staff and the Office of the Auditor General to correct the short-comings, and to ensure financial statements are accurate. That work is already well underway.

On a personal note, I am impressed by the professionalism and effort that the Office of the Auditor General put into this report. They interviewed staff members and trustees. They attended meetings of the Board and the Audit Committee. They reviewed countless documents and procedures. They wrote a thorough report and developed useful recommendations.

Again, the Board is committed to addressing all of the recommendations. We recognize they won't all be easy. We recognize that some will take longer than others, but we will be acting on each and every one of them.