



November 4, 2013

Ref: 169828

Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner  
Office of the Chief Coroner  
Metrotower 11  
800-4720 Kingsway  
Burnaby BC V5H 4N2

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

Thank you for your letter dated September 17, 2013, and enclosed results of the recent Child and Youth Suicide Death Review Panel. The first recommendation contained in the report is directed to the Ministry of Education, to which you have requested a response.

I would like to echo the concerns from the report that child or youth suicide is tragic and devastating to family, friends and the community. Child or youth suicide is a complex issue, and we need to continue our efforts to prevent suicide by supporting the mental health and well-being of all British Columbia's children and youth. We are committed to working with school districts and community groups to develop community level risk assessment protocols in support of early intervention and prevention of harmful behaviours.

We value the work that the Review Panel has put into the analysis and report, resulting in a number of recommendations. I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an overview of what the Province and boards of education are currently doing to address the first recommendation.

British Columbia's ERASE (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) strategy has been designed specifically to bring together schools, police and social agencies and other community partners to serve youth and families.

The Review Panel's recommendation for school districts to continue to work with youth serving agencies to develop protocols that support early intervention, confirms the importance of bringing together key partners and ensuring information sharing is happening between schools, government and community agencies. This recommendation directly relates and supports the direction of the government's ERASE strategy.

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This fall, a Provincial Advisory Committee composed of provincial leaders from school districts, law enforcement and social agencies will begin work on creating consistent violence threat risk assessment guidelines and information-sharing protocols and procedures between schools, government agencies and community partners.

Over the next five years, 15,000 educators and key youth service workers are being trained to identify early signs that someone may be at risk of hurting themselves or others. One key part of the training is equipping educators and community partners with the knowledge and skills to identify worrisome behaviours such as suicide ideation so that appropriate intervention and supports can be put in place as early as possible.

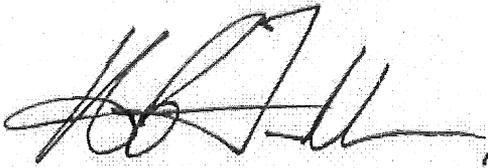
In our first year of ERASE training, over 4,000 educators, government agencies and community partners responsible for supporting students have been trained. In addition, many school districts have community protocols in place and many more are in the process of updating their protocols to include elements learned in the training. The remaining districts are starting down the path of creating a protocol unique to their community.

Level 3 ERASE training will focus on advanced violence threat risk assessment and on the creation of cross-sector teams, composed of school staff and community agencies within each school district, that can deal with serious risks and threats at a local level.

The ERASE strategy is a comprehensive prevention and intervention strategy designed to address bullying and harmful behaviours in schools. ERASE supports the BC Education Plan by focusing on personalized supports and interventions for students.

Thank you for sharing the results of the Child and Youth Suicide Death Review Panel. This report supports the direction that school districts and community agencies are taking to ensure preventative measures and supports are in place for children and youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Fassbender', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Fassbender  
Minister