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MEDIA RELEASE

Chilliwack School Trustee's Reprehensible Comments Condemned

Vancouver, B.C. - Recent social media comments by Chilliwack school trustee Barry Neufeld are unacceptable and inexcusable said BC School Trustees Association President Stephanie Higginson.

"Barry Neufeld's use of a slur against people with developmental disabilities is reprehensible and reflects poorly on the office he holds," said Higginson referring to a recent Facebook post in which Neufeld used offensive, demeaning language to attack local reporters. "Unfortunately, this is not the first time Neufeld has used hurtful language - there is an extended pattern of abusive language that can no longer be excused as a simple slip-up."

"We look to boards of education and school trustees as leaders in our communities to set the examples needed to create supportive learning settings," said Higginson. "BCSTA condemns Neufeld's hurtful language and acknowledges the real harm his words have caused people in the developmental disability community."

"The Chilliwack Board of Education has taken steps to censure Neufeld, and I applaud the board's efforts to clearly signal that the use of such disrespectful and exclusionary language is intolerable. I trust that voters in Chilliwack will note Neufeld's behaviour and will act accordingly when the time comes to cast their ballots in the next municipal election."

"Today I am affirming BCSTA's core values of equality, inclusivity and dignity," said Higginson. "We will continue to support boards of education across B.C. in building strong, effective and inclusive governance structures to ensure all students have access to the best public education possible."

BCSTA serves and supports all 60 B.C. boards of education in their work of improving student achievement, including establishing welcoming, inclusive learning environments for all students.

BCSTA encourages participation in the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign to raise awareness of the harmful effect of language on our most vulnerable learners. Take the pledge: <https://www.spreadtheword.global/>.

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For additional information and to arrange an interview with Stephanie Higginson, please contact:

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BCSTA's media kit can be downloaded [here](#).

The British Columbia School Trustees Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting Boards of Education in their work. Boards of Education locally represent the interests of their communities in the public education system in British Columbia. For more information about our Association and work, please visit www.bcsta.org.