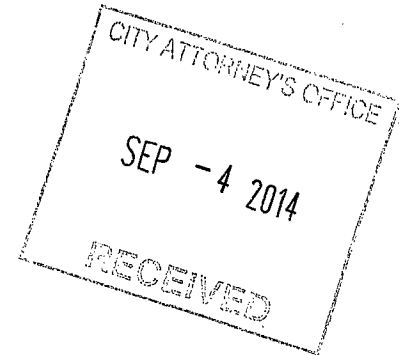


September 2, 2014

Eileen Blackwood, City Attorney
City of Burlington
149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401



RE: Burlington School District Budgeting Process

Dear Eileen:

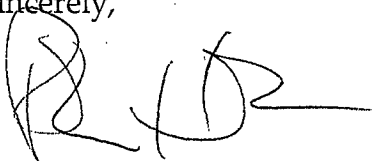
It has been brought to our attention that the Burlington City Council is considering a charter change which would give the Council some level of oversight of the Burlington School District budgeting process. In recent months, significant strides have been made to separate the accounts of BSD and the City. The Agency has encouraged this structural change to ensure compliance with the letter and spirit of Act 60 of 1997. As I have noted in previous correspondence, we truly appreciate that the City and the District have taken real steps to implement this important change in process.

Education funds in Vermont are statewide funds, not local funds. As a result, education funds are not subject to City Council oversight in the normal course. In our view, this separation of governance is essential to ensuring public trust in the statewide education fund. It also ensures clear accountability for local school boards.

For all of these reasons, and especially considering the recent changes which the City and the District have made to ensure the separation of accounts, we feel that the contemplated charter change would be an ill-advised step backwards.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Holcombe".

Rebecca Holcombe
Secretary of Education

cc: Miro Weinberger, Mayor