

Parents send premier earthquake 'comfort kits'

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VANCOUVER - Parents from three Vancouver elementary schools are sending a unique message to Premier Gordon Campbell – urging him to make school seismic upgrades a higher priority.

The parents have delivered dozens of "comfort kits" – special packages given to children in the event of an earthquake or other disaster.

The kit contains some food, sometimes a pack of playing cards and a letter from a parent, assuring the children that everything's going to be OK.

Dozens of those letters are being forward to the premier, to illustrate the potential danger children face – and the lack of action from the provincial government.

Kathy Harrison is with the Parent Advisory Committee at L'Ecole Bilingue.

"Those letters are heartbreaking to write, they're very personal and I really appreciate how many parents are willing to share them with us and with the premier," she says.

"So we delivered several dozen of those letters to the premier, along with a letter on behalf of the parents in the hope that he will understand how we feel."

She says the government's spending priorities don't put the safety of children first.

"We've been spending money seismically upgrading prisons and the Liquor Distribution Branch, but not some of the most vulnerable buildings in our community, our schools."

The latest call for government action comes on the heels of a report that identifies 69 Vancouver schools as high risk.

The Vancouver School Board wants those schools upgraded within the next 10 years, at a cost of \$365 million.