



December 16, 2020

The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside  
Minister of Education  
PO Box 9045 Stn. Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, B. C. V8W 9E2  
educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Whiteside,

Congratulations on your appointment as Education Minister. We are looking forward to working with you to find innovative and collaborative ways to support student achievement as we continue through the COVID-19 pandemic and the future recovery.

The Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows school district is a suburban district that supports the learning needs for over 15,000 students of all ages. Our district has teamed up with several post-secondary institutions and trades training organizations to offer diverse apprenticeship training opportunities for students in grades 10 to 12.

Back in 2014, it was identified that the lack of funding after graduation was a barrier to students completing trades programming that they started in a secondary school program. School districts were encouraged to enroll trades students that may have graduated, but not yet reached 19 years of age, and funding for Youth Apprentices was provided by the Ministry of Education. In our school district trades training is offered in partnership with post-secondary institutions and the funding provided by the Ministry of Education helps offset the fees charged by these institutions.

Recently, the Industry Training Authority (ITA) changed the definition of Youth Apprentice, resulting in graduated students under 19 years of age no longer being eligible to receive funding from the Ministry of Education to complete trades programs that they started before graduation. In 2014, the ITA defined "Youth Apprentices" as apprentices between the ages of 15-19 years of age. Active Youth Apprentices were converted to adult apprenticeship status on their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, or on their graduation date plus 150 days, whichever occurs first. The 2019 definition is "Youth Apprentices" as apprentices who are school age (i.e. up to completion of the school year in which the student turns 19) for the purposes of receiving Ministry of Education funding.

This means that a student that starts their trades program in grade 12 and graduates that year will not be funded by the Ministry of Education for their second year even if they are under 19 years of age. These students will have to pay the fees required to complete their second year of trades programming. Trades are an important sector of our economy and contribute to the ongoing growth and need in our communities. Supporting our youth to complete their 2-year program with the school district on their path to a full apprenticeship is an important step in their career path while also encouraging and supporting a robust economic trades sector.

***We are writing to you today to request that the Ministry of Education reinstate funding for graduated students under the age of 19 who are continuing the second year of their trades training program with school districts.*** This request was also supported by boards of education around the province at the BCSTA October Provincial Council. Trades programming is integral for a robust economy and it is important to ensure access to trades training for students who might not otherwise have the resources to continue this important extension of their education.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Korleen Carreras, Chairperson  
Board of Education

Cc:

The Board of Education, School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)  
Ms. Sylvia Russell, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Harry Dhillon, Deputy Superintendent  
Ms. Flavia Coughlan, Secretary Treasurer  
The Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Citizens' Services  
Mr. Bob D'Eith, MLA Maple Ridge-Mission  
All Boards of Education c/o BC School Trustees Association