

September 29, 2021

Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services
Room 224, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Attention: Mr. Bob D'Eith, MLA and Chair

Dear Committee Members:

RE: Budget 2022 Consultations

Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows School District No. 42 meets the learning needs of approximately 15,000 students of all ages in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, and is defined by its determination to keep student learning and growth at the heart of all its decisions.

We wish to express our support for the submissions you received from the BC School Trustees Association, other boards of education, and our education partners. We also support the standing committee's previous recommendations that education funding fully address the increased costs faced by school districts throughout the province year over year.

Process for Determining Ministry of Education Budget Needs

Previously, this Board has suggested there is a need for government to work more closely with local boards of education through the BCSTA, the BC Association of School Business Officials, and the BC School Superintendents Association to build an education budget from the ground up that truly reflects the needs of the system. In 2018, the independent Funding Model Review Panel recommended to government that:

The Ministry should identify net cost pressures and new program expenditures and, as part of the annual provincial budgeting process, bring them forward to Treasury Board for consideration when the total quantum of public education funding is being set. (Recommendation 18)

We hope that your committee will reinforce this recommendation with government by recommending its implementation as part of the regular budget building process.

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The Ministry should identify net cost pressures and new program expenditures and, as part of the annual provincial budgeting process, bring them forward to Treasury Board for consideration when the total quantum of public education funding is being set.

Ending Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination

In November 2019, the provincial government passed the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) into law. The *Declaration Act* establishes the UN Declaration as the province's framework for reconciliation, as called for by the TRC's Calls to Action. On June 11, 2021, the B.C. government released its Draft Action Plan relating to the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* ("DRIPA"). We are asking that the committee recommend the allocation of additional funding to the Ministry of Education to support the education related actions identified under the "Ending Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination" section of the action plan:

"Develop and implement an anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination strategy in the K-12 system to address the "racism of low expectations" reported by the Auditor General in 2015, including formally exploring how to implement a mandatory course or bundle of credits related to First Peoples as part of graduation requirements in B.C. (Ministry of Education)"

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Additional funding to the Ministry of Education to support the education related actions identified under the Ending Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination section of the action plan:

"Develop and implement an anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination strategy in the K-12 system to address the "racism of low expectations" reported by the Auditor General in 2015, including formally exploring how to implement a mandatory course or bundle of credits related to First Peoples as part of graduation requirements in B.C. (Ministry of Education)"

Increased Costs of K-12 Education

The impact of COVID-19 on K-12 education, students, staff, school district budgets and operations will be felt for many years to come.

In 2022, school districts will continue to face significant financial impacts related to COVID-19. These impacts will consist of increased ventilation costs, increased sanitation and custodial costs, reduced international education tuition revenue, increased substitute staff costs, increased facilities maintenance, as well as increased technology costs. The provincial government will have to make allowances in the 2022 budget to address the ongoing increased costs of K-12 education.

To mitigate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable families, our school district worked with community partners to provide nutritious meals to students in our care. We see this as a continuing need in our community and we are asking that the committee recommend the implementation of a universal meals program funded by the federal and provincial governments.

The need for enhanced mental health supports for staff and students has also been highlighted by the pandemic. The Integrated Child and Youth teams model is starting to be piloted in a few school districts in the province and we are asking that the committee recommend the ongoing funding of Integrated Child and Youth teams in all school districts.

We appreciate the decision made as part of Budget 2021 to provide free transit to children under the age of 12. We would like to see this commitment expanded to ensure that all students have access to the necessary transportation services to and from school regardless of where they reside in the province. We are asking that the committee recommend the funding of transportation to and from school either by public transit or school district operated transportation.

Additional funding to the Ministry of Education to support:

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- increased ventilation costs, increased sanitation and custodial costs, reduced international education tuition revenue, increased substitute staff costs, increased facilities maintenance, as well as increased technology costs
- the implementation of a universal meals program funded by the federal and provincial governments
- Integrated Child and Youth teams in all school districts
- transportation to and from school either by public transit or school district operated transportation

Capital Investments

In 2018, the provincial government unveiled the CleanBC plan - a pathway to achieve the province's legislated climate targets of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40% by the year 2030, based on 2007 levels.

This plan includes a goal for cleaner public-sector buildings. The strategy outlined in the plan includes new schools built in B.C. achieving high levels of environmental performance, and making the existing stock of buildings cleaner, smarter, and more energy efficient by taking advantage of the latest proven technologies.

In order to achieve the GHG emission reduction goal set by the province, significant investments need to be made in retrofitting existing schools. We are asking that the committee recommend the allocation of additional capital funds in the 2022 budget directed at supporting the necessary school retrofit projects.

We recognize the significant investment this government has already made related to capital infrastructure; we recommend that this investment be continued and where possible increased in the future. In particular, we would like to see an increased investment towards major renovations for existing facilities, new schools and administrative buildings.

For too long school districts have not received adequate funding. The deferred maintenance costs continue to accumulate while the condition of our schools continues to deteriorate. Similarly, when facilities are seismically upgraded, the province should also allocate funds for completing the upgrade of these aging facilities. Not completing necessary facility renovations at the time of seismic upgrading is extremely inefficient and will add significantly to the overall cost to taxpayers if they are completed separately. We are asking the committee to recommend that government seriously consider funding all

needed and related renovations required in older school facilities at the same time seismic upgrades are being completed.

The current capital funding model does not include funding for the administrative or maintenance facilities required to support the delivery of educational services in school districts. This means that in order to build new facilities or renovate existing facilities, school districts have to generate local capital by selling unused properties or direct operating allocations towards such capital investments. We are asking the committee to recommend government start funding all school district capital needs, including schools, administrative and maintenance buildings.


Additional capital budget allocations to the Ministry of Education to support:

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- retrofit of school district facilities to achieve CleanBC GHG emission reduction goals
- all needed and related renovations required in older school facilities at the same time seismic upgrades are being completed
- all school district capital needs, including schools, administrative and maintenance buildings

We look forward to contributing in any way we can to the further discussion of these matters and thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Korleen Carreras, Chairperson
Board of Education

Cc:

The Board of Education, School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)
The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education
The Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Citizen Services
Mr. Bob D'Eith, MLA Maple Ridge-Mission
Mr. Harry Dhillon, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Flavia Coughlan, Secretary Treasurer
Mr. Grant Frend, President, Maple Ridge Principals' and Vice Principals' Association
Mr. Trevor Takasaki, President, Maple Ridge Teachers' Association
Mr. Jason Franklin, President, CUPE Local 703
Ms. Tania Sargent, Chairperson, District Parent Advisory Council
Ms. Stephanie Higginson, President, BCSTA
Ms. Flavia Coughlan, President, BCASBO
Mr. Kevin Kaardal, President, BCSSA