

May 29, 2025

The Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Education and Child Care
Office of the Minister
Parliament Buildings
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Via Email: ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Subject: Need for a More Reliable and Equitable Funding Model

Dear Minister Beare,

The Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Board of Education is writing to express our district's growing concern regarding the ongoing structural funding challenges facing School District 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows) and to request immediate action to address systemic inequities—particularly in CommunityLINK funding—and the lack of inflationary adjustments in several key funding areas.

For several years, our district has relied on prior-year surplus funds to balance our annual operating budget. These funds were originally intended for critical infrastructure investments, and diverting them to support daily operations is no longer sustainable. This practice was identified as a significant concern in our recent Enterprise Risk Management review and underscores the urgent need for a more reliable and equitable funding model.

In the current budget cycle, we have taken significant steps to reduce our reliance on reserves and work toward a structurally balanced budget. However, this has come at a considerable cost to students and families. Service reductions this year have included, but are not limited to:

1. Cancellation of the Silver Valley school bus routes;
2. Elimination of the Kindergarten transition Education Assistant role;
3. Reductions in secondary school counselling time;
4. Reduced collaborative teaching time;
5. Reduced hours for Child and Youth Care Workers in elementary schools;
6. Elimination of a Vice Principal position focused on Indigenous Education;
7. Elimination of the District Helping Teacher for Racial Inclusivity

The elimination of the elementary band program was proposed and it has been reprieved for one year only through temporary funding. While the elementary band program has been temporarily sustained for the 2025/26 school year, it will only continue if fully funded through student fees and external revenue sources—raising concerns about accessibility and equity.

Looking ahead, our financial challenges are projected to grow more severe, with anticipated operating shortfalls of:

1. \$1.44 million in 2026/27,
2. \$2.12 million in 2027/28, and
3. \$2.02 million in 2028/29.

Unless provincial funding levels change, further reductions will be unavoidable.

Our community has responded with deep concern. Over 1,200 individuals participated in our public budget survey, and 54 delegations presented to the Board at our input meeting. In addition, we have received countless letters and emails from families and staff expressing distress over the loss of valued services. These are not only our constituents—they are yours as well.

Further compounding our situation is the inequity in CommunityLINK funding. Unlike many districts, SD42 does not receive the level of support necessary to implement a universal school meals program, despite provincial and federal expectations. The attached chart highlights how disproportionately low our CommunityLINK allocation is compared to other districts. While SD42 is projected to have 2.78% of the province's total student enrolment for 2025/26, it has been allocated only 1.05% of the \$60.4M CommunityLINK grant. In contrast, SD42 received 2.93% of the National School Food Program grant for 2024/25, which is based on a new socio-economic funding model. This discrepancy underscores the inequity of the CommunityLINK funding model, which fails to provide SD42 with sufficient resources to support its vulnerable student population.

The Ministry is clearly aware of this inequity. In a letter dated October 5, 2023, former Minister Rachna Singh acknowledged:

"We agree that the funding allocations under CommunityLINK require revision as they are based on outdated socio-economic data and a historical grant application process and, therefore, no longer address current inequities across the province. Internal discussions are taking place on how to address these inequities."

We were encouraged by this statement at the time and anticipated adjustments in the 2024/25 provincial allocation. Unfortunately, no changes were made last year or this year, while inflation continues to erode the value of existing funding—particularly in categories like StrongStart, student transportation, and other essential but indirect services and supports to student learning.

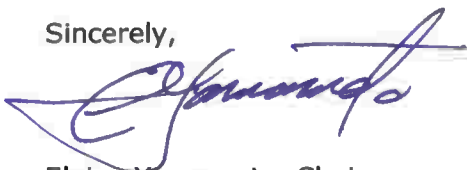
With this context in mind, we respectfully urge the Ministry to:

1. Expedite the review and revision of CommunityLINK funding to address long-standing inequities;
2. Provide clarity on the expected timeline and implementation of this review;
3. Consider inflationary adjustments across non-labour funding categories to reflect current cost realities.

Our district is committed to providing a high-quality, inclusive education to all students. However, without responsive and equitable funding, our ability to meet that commitment is in jeopardy.

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter. We remain hopeful that meaningful adjustments are forthcoming and look forward to meeting with you in June.

Sincerely,



Elaine Yamamoto, Chairperson
Board of Education

Cc: The Board of Education, School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)
Teresa Downs, Superintendent of Schools & CEO
Richard Rennie, Secretary Treasurer

Attachment

2025-26 CommunityLINK and Equity of Opportunity funding (March 2025 grant tables)

School District	Summary	Table 4c	Table 1b	Total of CommunityLINK & Equity of Opportunity	Per Student		
	Community- LINK	Equity of	Enrolment		Community- LINK	Equity of Opportunity Supplement	CommunityLINK & Equity of Opportunity
		Opportunity Supplement Total	2025/26 Full-Year				
42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	636,848	499,319	16,764.0100	1,136,167	38	30	68
93 Conseil scolaire francophone	140,301	286,768	6,044.3750	427,069	23	47	71
37 Delta	671,036	550,411	16,125.5000	1,221,447	42	34	76
43 Coquitlam	1,735,490	1,145,421	34,108.5000	2,880,911	51	34	84
45 West Vancouver	326,583	270,817	7,036.7750	597,400	46	38	85
36 Surrey	4,387,210	2,787,808	82,206.0429	7,175,018	53	34	87
23 Central Okanagan	1,296,051	921,844	25,219.3750	2,217,895	51	37	88
38 Richmond	869,538	1,258,007	23,593.7813	2,127,545	37	53	90
62 Sooke	800,343	532,942	14,242.0000	1,333,285	56	37	94
71 Comox Valley	627,949	449,334	11,425.0000	1,077,283	55	39	94
83 North Okanagan-Shuswap	368,914	291,959	6,731.5237	660,873	55	43	98
34 Abbotsford	1,325,905	891,947	20,602.0000	2,217,852	64	43	108
44 North Vancouver	1,304,811	507,889	16,657.4741	1,812,700	78	30	109
33 Chilliwack	775,082	965,343	15,885.1413	1,740,425	49	61	110
48 Sea to Sky	344,007	241,842	5,230.8120	585,849	66	46	112
35 Langley	2,365,238	742,640	26,227.8036	3,107,878	90	28	118
63 Saanich	486,599	460,558	7,836.1250	947,157	62	59	121
5 Southeast Kootenay	422,724	333,666	5,988.0000	756,390	71	56	126
75 Mission	460,240	401,509	6,806.0000	861,749	68	59	127
22 Vernon	649,093	485,304	8,864.0000	1,134,397	73	55	128
41 Burnaby	2,714,667	1,027,933	28,593.3048	3,742,600	95	36	131
67 Okanagan Skaha	403,065	392,148	6,032.5000	795,213	67	65	132
47 qathet	230,412	212,538	3,115.0000	442,950	74	68	142
79 Cowichan Valley	768,315	433,349	8,364.7660	1,201,664	92	52	144
Provincial Total	60,392,862	28,000,000	603,706.8966	88,392,862	100	46	146
69 Qualicum	442,357	202,234	4,298.0000	644,591	103	47	150
60 Peace River North	647,478	295,957	6,272.2500	943,435	103	47	150
19 Revelstoke	118,513	58,156	1,117.0000	176,669	106	52	158
73 Kamloops-Thompson	1,697,265	933,128	16,200.5000	2,630,393	105	58	162
53 Okanagan Similkameen	254,752	141,511	2,387.5625	396,263	107	59	166
6 Rocky Mountain	445,058	138,988	3,513.7500	584,046	127	40	166
72 Campbell River	602,848	366,342	5,757.1700	969,190	105	64	168
64 Gulf Islands	164,268	79,119	1,410.0000	243,387	117	56	173
59 Peace River South	416,681	277,105	3,714.7110	693,786	112	75	187
54 Bulkley Valley	265,112	118,279	1,910.0000	383,391	139	62	201
51 Boundary	172,818	78,309	1,245.2500	251,127	139	63	202
8 Kootenay Lake	759,048	252,689	4,721.0000	1,011,737	161	54	214
46 Sunshine Coast	558,396	204,710	3,495.5000	763,106	160	59	218
58 Nicola-Similkameen	322,729	141,446	2,086.5000	464,175	155	68	222
68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith	2,630,683	879,899	15,638.0170	3,510,582	168	56	224
20 Kootenay-Columbia	769,086	215,087	4,171.8440	984,173	184	52	236
27 Cariboo-Chilcotin	737,288	393,439	4,537.0000	1,130,727	163	87	249
39 Vancouver	10,647,334	2,471,840	52,311.2500	13,119,174	204	47	251
40 New Westminster	1,738,062	348,558	8,183.4900	2,086,620	212	43	255
91 Nechako Lakes	583,164	387,502	3,771.5000	970,666	155	103	257
57 Prince George	2,435,896	939,157	13,110.0000	3,375,053	186	72	257
82 Coast Mountains	655,464	436,137	4,236.0000	1,091,601	155	103	258
61 Greater Victoria	4,277,695	1,091,201	20,754.3750	5,368,896	206	53	259
10 Arrow Lakes	107,344	37,565	519.0000	144,909	207	72	279
28 Quesnel	568,856	251,017	2,848.0000	819,873	200	88	288
78 Fraser-Cascade	392,453	178,825	1,790.9375	571,278	219	100	319
81 Fort Nelson	155,054	42,330	600.0000	197,384	258	71	329
50 Haida Gwaii	123,644	45,917	501.0000	169,561	247	92	338
70 Pacific Rim	1,019,659	346,172	3,825.0000	1,365,831	267	91	357
85 Vancouver Island North	371,538	138,737	1,177.0000	510,275	316	118	434
52 Prince Rupert	582,790	208,059	1,780.4800	790,849	327	117	444
74 Gold Trail	424,710	91,283	1,033.0000	515,993	411	88	500
92 Nisga'a	158,239	45,554	390.0000	203,793	406	117	523
84 Vancouver Island West	148,081	36,911	310.0000	184,992	478	119	597
49 Central Coast	281,675	19,110	213.0000	300,785	1,322	90	1,412
87 Stikine	606,403	16,431	177.0000	622,834	3,426	93	3,519