

June 18, 2025
Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services
Parliamentary Committees Office
Room 224, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Email: FinanceCommittee@leg.bc.ca
Submitted via: [LABC Consultation Portal](#)

Dear Committee Members:

RE: Provincial Budget 2026 Consultation Opportunity

The Board of Education of School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the 2026 Provincial Budget consultation. Public education is foundational to a just, healthy, and prosperous society. Yet year after year, structural underfunding and a lack of inflationary adjustment have forced school districts like ours to make increasingly difficult choices, putting essential services, classroom supports, and infrastructure investments at risk.

To ensure all B.C. students can thrive, we urge the provincial government to make bold, systemic reinvestments in education through the following three priorities:

1. Make K–12 Public Education a Provincial Budget Priority

Education's share of the provincial budget has steadily declined, from 15.49% in 2001-02 to just 7.97% in 2023-24. This is out of step with B.C.'s population growth, student needs, and inflationary cost pressures.

We support BCSTA's resolution calling on the Premier, the Minister of Finance, and Treasury Board to increase the percentage of the Provincial Budget allocated to K–12 education and ensure funding is indexed to inflation and actual district costs.

Key Recommendations:

- **Increase operational funding to reflect real inflationary pressures**, particularly for supplies, services, and non-salary expenses.
- **Fully fund the cost of collective agreement increases**, including rising extended health and dental benefit premiums, which districts cannot sustain without sacrificing direct classroom services.
- **Modernize and reform special purpose funding** for CommunityLINK (by establishing an equitable funding model) and for Early Learning Programs, including StrongStart, to address demographic shifts, community needs, and sustained inflationary cost pressures.

2. Strengthen Supports for Students with Diverse Needs in the Early Years

School District No. 42 supports BCSTA's call to shift early childhood support models from a strictly medical model to a more responsive, social model of disability. This would enable schools to support children in K–3 without requiring a formal diagnosis, which is often delayed due to long waitlists.

We also recognize the Minister's Mandate Letter emphasis on strengthening early childhood and inclusive supports and recommend targeted investments to ensure students with complex needs receive timely, school-based interventions in their earliest years.

Key Recommendations:

- **Fund the transition to a social model of disability in K–3**, allowing school-based teams to initiate supports based on observed student needs.
- **Provide stable, flexible funding** that allows districts to deploy Education Assistants and other support staff where and when they are most needed in K–3 settings.
- **Prioritize early intervention funding** for StrongStart and other early learning programs that address pandemic-related developmental delays.

3. Modernise Capital and Technology Investments

Our district supports the need for capital funding increases in both major and minor capital programs, particularly to address IT infrastructure, learning environments, and health and safety standards. The area standards for new schools have not been comprehensively reviewed in decades and no longer reflect inclusive design, student mental health needs, or space required for Indigenous and community programming.

In addition, cybersecurity poses a growing risk to school operations. School districts are under-equipped to manage this responsibility without provincial support.

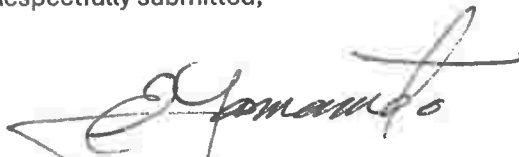
Key Recommendations:

- **Increase capital funding** for IT modernization, digital infrastructure, and classroom-ready technology.
- **Initiate a full review of school area standards**, with a focus on accessibility, diverse learning needs, and First Nations partnerships.
- **Develop and fully fund a coordinated provincial plan for K–12 cybersecurity**, including shared expertise, system-wide training, and district-level implementation funding.

School District No. 42 thanks the Committee for its attention to these critical priorities. The 2026 Provincial Budget is an opportunity to reset funding assumptions, reinforce system-wide equity, and invest in the potential of every learner in B.C.

We would be pleased to provide further context or participate in future discussions.

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine Yamamoto, Chairperson
Board of Education

cc: The Board of Education of School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows)
The Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Education and Child Care and MLA Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows
The Honourable Brenda Bailey, Minister of Finance
The Honourable George Chow, Minister of Citizen Services
Lawrence Mok, MLA Maple Ridge East
Teresa Downs, Superintendent of Schools
Richard Rennie, Secretary Treasurer
Martin Dmitrieff, President, Maple Ridge Teachers' Association
Jason Franklin, President, CUPE Local 703
Chris Schultz-Lorentzen, Chairperson, District Parent Advisory Council
Tracy Loffler, President, BCSTA