

October 22, 2025

The Honourable Niki Sharma
Attorney General of British Columbia
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
VIA Email: AG.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Sharma,

I am writing regarding the allocation of funds from the Province's tobacco litigation settlement and the opportunity to strengthen youth prevention and education efforts across British Columbia.

On August 29, 2025, your ministry announced that British Columbia had received the first \$936 million from its lawsuit against tobacco companies. Over the next 18 years, the Province will receive more than \$3.6 billion to invest in cancer treatment, primary care, research, and smoking cessation.

While these priorities are deeply important, it is equally vital that students across the province benefit directly through targeted investment in prevention and cessation programs for youth. Tobacco and nicotine use among young people remains a pressing concern. A 2023 McCreary Centre Society report found that seven percent of B.C. youth reported smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days, while twenty-seven percent reported vaping during the same period. Similarly, a 2022 Health Canada survey found that thirty percent of youth aged 15–19 had tried vaping, and fourteen percent had vaped within the past month. Experts note that Canada has some of the highest teen vaping rates in the world.

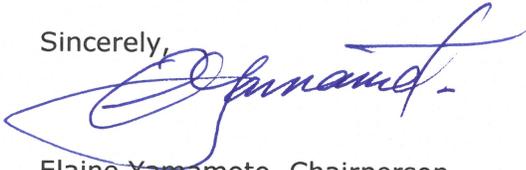
Your government's introduction last week of the Vaping Product Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act demonstrates strong leadership and a continued commitment to protecting youth and holding manufacturers accountable for the harms caused by these products. This builds on earlier measures, such as the 2019 Action Plan that restricted advertising near youth spaces, and increased the sales tax on vapour products to deter access. These combined efforts have made British Columbia a national leader in tobacco and vaping regulation.

Despite this progress, the health and educational impacts of nicotine addiction remain visible in classrooms across the province. School districts play a crucial role in substance-use education and in supporting students whose learning and well-being are affected by addiction. Directing a portion of the tobacco litigation settlement toward prevention, education, and cessation initiatives in schools would build on your ministry's strong record and ensure that the funds secured from this landmark case create lasting benefits for the next generation.

Given this context, we respectfully urge your ministry to designate a portion of the tobacco settlement funds for school-based programs that prevent and reduce youth nicotine use. This would complement the government's ongoing efforts to hold corporations accountable while investing in public health and education.

Thank you for your continued leadership on public health and for your government's ongoing efforts to safeguard the well-being of youth in British Columbia.

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
Lisa Beare, MLA Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows
Lawrence Mok, MLA Maple Ridge East
Tracy Loffler, BCSTA President
Trevor Davies, BCSTA CEO



VIA EMAIL

Ref. 698275

December 24, 2025

Elaine Yamamoto
Chairperson
Board of Education
School District 42
22225 Brown Avenue
Maple Ridge BC V2X 8N6
Email: Rebecca.Lyle@sd42.ca

Dear Elaine Yamamoto:

Thank you for your letter of October 22, 2025.

I note your request that the Ministry of Attorney General designate a portion of the Province's tobacco settlement funds for school-based programs that prevent and reduce youth nicotine use.

I would like to first assure you that the government remains committed to reducing smoking. While we are pleased that our efforts over the years have resulted in British Columbia having the lowest smoking rate in the country, we know there is more work to be done.

In your letter, you suggest specific approaches that you believe will assist in preventing smoking and resulting harm. As programs and policy in this area fall within the purview of the Ministry of Health, your correspondence has been referred to the Population and Public Health Division. A member of the team will reach out to you directly. Alternatively, you may contact the office at: 250-952-1731.

Thank you again for your correspondence and ongoing commitment to the health of your fellow British Columbians.

I appreciate your taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Niki Sharma, KC
Attorney General and Deputy Premier