

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](mailto: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.

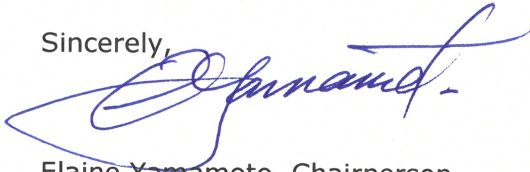
Your government's introduction last week of the Vaping Product Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act demonstrates strong leadership and a continued commitment to protecting youth and holding manufacturers accountable for the harms caused by these products. This builds on earlier measures, such as 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