

November 23, 2022

Honourable David Eby  
Premier of British Columbia  
West Annex Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4

**Re: Open letter to request items be included in upcoming Mandate Letter**

Dear Premier David Eby and Planning and Priorities Committee:

Premier Eby, congratulations on your new role as the Premier of British Columbia. We appreciate the leadership you have shown in your roles as an MLA in BC and look forward to the important work you will do as leader in this province.

As District Parent Advisory Chairs and Presidents from some of the largest cities in BC, we are writing to respectfully request three items be included in your first mandate letter to the Minister of Education and Child Care. As volunteer parent leaders, on the ground in school districts across BC, we have a different lens through which to view the school system and we hope you will consider our request comes with the respect and deep gratitude we have for the staff and elected officials working every day to operate and improve the BC Education system. We believe these three areas are important yet achievable by your Government.

1. Align housing policy and planning with school planning.
2. Restore life-cycle cost analysis for school facilities.
3. Provide timely and equitable access to education for students with disabilities.

**Housing and School Planning**

As per Statistics Canada, this year BC experienced record-breaking growth with 100,000 newcomers arriving. Our schools in many of the areas these newcomers live in are already bursting at the seams and cannot take any more enrollment. When it comes to housing and school planning, this province continues to fail in proper planning to meet the needs of BC residents. We are concerned that we will continue to see our annual provincial growth increase with no long term strategic plans to address our overcrowded schools. For this reason, we believe that housing planning and development and school planning must be aligned.

An example of how this might roll out is already under way in Nanaimo where an agreement is in place involving both the city and the school district. Both organizations are working together to address the need for housing and planning for schools to support the residents. We would like to see this formally enacted in all districts across the province along with the engagement of the Ministry of Education and Child Care towards the transparent long-term plan to fulfill these regional strategies.

### **Life Cycle Cost Analysis**

Under the BC Liberal Government in 2016, the Ministry of Education removed Schedule D from Capital Funding Rules creating a core structural policy flaw that provides our kids with sub-standard learning environments.

The results of a life cycle cost analysis generally should be provided as part of the Project Identification Report for a renovation or replacement project, including a seismic mitigation project where building operating costs may be materially affected.

The following are the minimum criteria to be considered in the life cycle analysis:

- Capital Investment
- Unplanned maintenance
- Planned annual maintenance, including interior retrofit
- Operating costs (including energy)
- Utility costs
- Cyclical renewals (including roofing)
- Planned expenditures to bring the facility into compliance with the building code (eg. Accessibility, fire suppression, electrical, exits)
- Residual value of existing building
- Residual value of replacement building
- Status of non-structural seismic

The life cycle cost analysis is expected to determine the most cost-effective option, based on capital and life-cycle cost assessments, functional and educational program requirements, energy and operating efficiency, and life expectancy targets for major components.

Deferred maintenance, sustainability, accessibility, air, and water safety are NOT currently included as costs when planning to either upgrade or replace an old school. For schools with portables, this is even more problematic.

For this reason, we recommend this government restore Life Cycle Cost Analysis.

### **Equitable access to education for students with disabilities**

Year after year we continue to hear about students in various districts across BC who are not able to start the school year along with their peers because support has not yet been put in place to

receive them. Often this exclusion takes months to resolve. This is a failure in planning and needs to be addressed immediately. Poor planning that leads to a student being denied access to education is not something students in this province should be experiencing. We ask that the planning requirement be mandated to be reviewed and approved by June so appropriate support staff can be in place on the first day of school in September.


Our most vulnerable students should not also have to suffer inequalities in access to public education due to poor planning from our districts.

## Closing

We are incredibly appreciative of this government's initiative with the Student and Family Affordability Fund and we hope that you can agree that addressing the issues we have highlighted here are also critical to improving student and family wellbeing in our education system. We believe improved process and increased collaboration around planning is needed to proactively create safe spaces for learning within the rising enrollment of BC schools today and into the future.


The undersigned District Parent Advisory Councils (DPACs) respectfully request that you consider including our recommendations in your mandate letter to the Minister of Education and Child Care enabling us all to contribute to a better future for students of BC. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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Rina Diaz  
Surrey #36  
District Parent  
Advisory Council  
(DPAC)  
President



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Vik Khanna  
Vancouver #39  
District Parent  
Advisory Council  
(DPAC)  
Chair



Simon Adams  
Central Okanagan  
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“Tracy Humphreys”

Tracy Humphreys  
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