

May 14, 2025

Premier David Eby
PO BOX 9041 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1
Via email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Eby,

Re: Investing in BCs Future Through Education

Our public education investment is not just about dollars. It's about values. Underfunding public education sends powerful, damaging messages:

- *Not all children matter equally, especially those with the most complex needs.*
- *Education is a cost, not an investment.*
- *Dedicated professionals should continue to carry the burden of a stretched system with little relief.*
- *BC values children and youth less than the other provinces across Canada.*
- *Decline is acceptable, as long as it's slow and quiet.*
- *The future can wait.*

But the future is here. Schools are already overcrowded. Students are already underserved. Staff are already overwhelmed. And all of this is happening in a time of growing global and economic instability, including looming trade pressures with the US, that will only deepen the impact on our province's youngest residents if we do not act.

As District Parent Advisory Councils representing families across British Columbia, we are compelled to share our deep concern about the current state of the finances of public education in our province. We are in the midst of the school district budget development cycle, and School districts across BC are facing extraordinary financial pressure not seen in many years, not from mismanagement, but from the cumulative effects of structural underfunding. We ask you to take urgent action on the following:

1. Fully fund all costs associated with collective agreements, including inflationary impacts.

School districts face escalating insurance premiums, sick leave costs, and other systemic pressures that were not fully accounted for in earlier funding. Fully funding

collective agreements must mean covering the true, inflation-adjusted cost of delivering them for the entirety of their duration, not only the wages negotiated at signing.

2. Fund education to reflect the real-world costs of delivering it.

Inflation has significantly eroded the purchasing power of all districts, regardless of whether a district is experiencing enrollment growth, decline or is in steady state. Classrooms are more complex, student needs are greater, and yet resources remain stagnant. The result? Educators and support staff are burning out. Sick leave costs are soaring, not just due to the long shadow of COVID-19, but because the system is simply too strained. Joy and energy in our schools are being replaced by exhaustion. Parent Advisory Councils are feeling the pressure to supplement missing school supplies, transportation costs and educational programs. This leaves families, feeling the same economic pressures as government and businesses across BC, stretched too thin to continue.

3. End the requirement for operational dollars to subsidize capital expenses.

School districts in BC are often required to contribute to land purchases, new construction, and other capital projects using their small operating surplus, funds that should be limited and only used for unexpected cost pressures mid-year. Districts must also fund short-term space solutions like portables, and moving and maintaining portables, from operational dollars, expenses not covered by the provincial capital plan.

This practice diverts critical resources away from student learning and essential services. Requiring districts to fund capital needs, including portables, from their operating budgets forces an impossible choice: sacrificing today's classrooms to pay for tomorrow's infrastructure. Both are critical, but the current model pits one against the other.

This is not sustainable. Capital projects must be fully funded through dedicated provincial capital funding, while operating budgets must be protected to support students and the delivery of high-quality education.

We know you've heard from us before on these issues, and you will continue to. Funding school operations and funding school spaces are not competing priorities; both are essential, and both must be addressed. Too often, public education is quietly deprioritized, justified by shifting economic pressures or temporary crises. But there is no equity without adequate funding, and no quality without stability.

BC's future depends on a strong, accessible, and well-resourced public education system. We urge your ministries to fund it like it matters, because it does.

With regards, from BC DPACs

<p>Laura Kwong Chair, New Westminster DPAC, SD40</p> 	<p>Nicola Baker President, Central Okanagan Parent Advisory Council, SD23</p> 
<p>Bonnie McBride Chair, SD73 District Parent Advisory Council</p> 	<p>Gaby Maioli Chair, SD41 DPAC</p> 
<p>Tom Davis President, SD62 District Parent Advisory Council</p> 	<p>Anne Whitmore President, Surrey DPAC</p> 
<p>Yania Greenaway President, SD22 DPAC</p>	<p>Katie Bartel Chair of Chilliwack DPAC</p> 
<p>Rachel Eastman Chair, Sunshine Coast DPAC, SD46</p>	<p>Megan Misovic President, Confederation of Parents' Advisory Councils of Saanich, SD63</p>

CC Minister of Education and Child Care, Hon. Lisa Beare
Minister of Finance, Hon. Brenda Bailey
Minister of Infrastructure, Hon. Bowinn Ma
Deputy Minister of Education and Child Care, Kaye Krishna
Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, Bobbi Plecas