



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

June 22, 2018

The Honourable Carole James

Minister of Health

PO Box 9048, Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

SUBJECT: Programs to support student health literacy and the needs of vulnerable youth

Dear Minister James,

At the most recent Annual General Meeting of the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA), our membership passed the following two resolutions requesting increased programming to meet the needs of children and youth across our province:

That BCSTA request the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance implement additional funding for programming and resources that adequately support the needs of low income students, vulnerable students, children in care and youth in youth agreements with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

That BCSTA advocate for the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to invest in effective strategies to increase students' health literacy related to drug use to equip them to make informed, healthy choices about cannabis use, including funding research-based drug education programs in all schools, as well as a range of evidence informed public education strategies.

Establishing programs and providing resources to proactively address the needs of vulnerable students is appropriate for a number of reasons. Left unaddressed, the concerns of children and youth quickly become the life-long problems of adults. As we are all far too aware, our communities are facing a crisis trying to deal with the results of previous inaction and a lack of effective intervention.

Our member boards of education and the school districts they represent are committed to being part of the solution, but we need your help. In order to implement the variety of programs and interventions necessary to ensure success, we need the combined efforts and resources of a number of ministries to come together for a common purpose. While the addition of added funding and resources is part of the solution, there are also many opportunities to address the issues at hand through changes in policy and processes. Breaking down the silos between us will be essential to eventual success.

The Ministry of Education has been very supportive of local programs and initiatives to address student concerns within the K-12 education system. We know, however, that the serious problems faced by youth do not end at the school door. Solutions must follow individual students into the community and their lives outside of the classroom if they are to be truly successful. That is where we need your help.

BCSTA will continue to promote and support effective program development within schools and our member school districts. Please consider how you and your ministry might join with us toward making a real difference in the lives of vulnerable youth. Certainly there is no lack of opportunity to bring forward new resources, policies, cooperation and funding to help meet our common goals.

Thank you for considering our request and we look forward to any future dialogue on this important proposal that you might consider. Your support for bringing the various federal and provincial government ministries together in support of this important initiative is critical to any future success.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Swan', written over a horizontal line.

Gordon Swan

President

British Columbia School Trustees Association

Cc: Hon. Rob Fleming, BC Minister of Education



17. Support for Vulnerable Students

Submitted by: *Northern Interior Branch*

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA request the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance implement additional funding for programming and resources that adequately support the needs of low-income students, vulnerable students, children in care and youth in youth agreements with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Rationale:

BC's child poverty rate is higher than the national average.

The educational system provides a safe and consistent environment for many of these students. In order to provide wraparound supports for these students, we need additional funding to ensure these supports are not coming out of existing funds.

To ensure equity for all students, funding needs to be increased for special education programs, Community Link and mental health supports.

Reference:

- [CommunityLINK](#)

This is an action motion and does not change or contradict any existing Foundational or Policy Statement.

This motion relates to Foundational Statements 4.3FS (Child Poverty and Learning) and 4.6FS (Services for Students).

27. Education of Students regarding Cannabis Use

Submitted by: *Kootenay Boundary Branch*

BE IT RESOLVED:

That BCSTA advocate for the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to invest in effective strategies to increase students' health literacy related to drug use to equip them to make informed, healthy choices about cannabis use, including funding research-based drug education programs in all schools, as well as a range of evidence-informed public education strategies.

Rationale:

The change in the legal status of cannabis presents an opportunity to engage in meaningful drug education initiatives. A health-promotion approach to cannabis education would place healthy individuals, families and communities at the forefront. Health-promotion efforts should enable people to increase control over their health and, ultimately, reduce the potential health and social harms associated with cannabis use. This would ensure easy access to evidence-based information that reflects the complexity of the issues, opportunities for critical thinking and interpersonal dialogue and the means to develop personal and social skills.

Reference:

- Centre for Addictions Research of BC

This is an action motion and does not change or contradict any existing Foundational or Policy Statement.

This motion relates to Foundational Statement 4.2FS (Development of Student Potential).