

**MEDIA RELEASE****BCSTA responds to B.C. government's throne speech**

**[Vancouver, B.C. – February 14, 2018]** On Tuesday, February 13, 2018, the government's speech from the throne highlighted the need for British Columbia to invest in our children and youth. To quote from the speech:

“Education is the great equalizer. From young students eager to learn, to adults training to earn the skills they need to join the workforce, an investment in education is an investment in our future.”

It was left unclear, however, how these words will translate into tangible action by the current government.

The BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) was pleased to see reconfirmation of government's previous commitments to accelerate the pace of school construction, review the current funding distribution formula and to fund the Supreme Court of Canada decision on collective agreement class size and composition language. What the speech lacked, however, was any indication of substantive new initiatives or policy direction. Beyond promising a new capital fund for school playground construction, this throne speech did not signal investment or a fresh vision for K-12 education.

In his response to the speech, BCSTA President Gordon Swan noted:

“I was pleased to hear recognition of the importance of education to both our province and our youth. Our members would, however, like to see that sentiment translated into something more tangible for local schools and their students.”

“There is much work to be done in school districts to ensure improvements in student success. BCSTA will be advocating for fresh ideas and new investments that signal a progressive path forward, and support student achievement as our key focus.”

Boards of education across the province will now be looking to next week's provincial budget, and perhaps some yet to be announced policy direction, to assist them with their commitment to improving outcomes for all students.

“It isn't just about government providing the budget necessary to support appropriate learning opportunities for students across the province. We need changes in legislation and provincial policy that truly put students first,” said President Swan. “Flexibility to meet local needs is equally important.”

BCSTA will continue to work with our provincial government to encourage the changes needed to ensure an effective and equitable public education system for all students.

Local boards of education are the voice of parents and communities in advocating for the quality schools, programs and opportunities we need to ensure that “education is the great equalizer.”

- 30 -

For further information about BCSTA’s review of the throne speech, or to reach President Gordon Swan for additional comments, please contact:

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The British Columbia School Trustees Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting Boards of Education in their work. Boards of Education locally represent the interests of their communities in the public education system in British Columbia. For more information about our Association and work, please visit [www.bcsta.org](http://www.bcsta.org).